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Wazy Folks

And Others

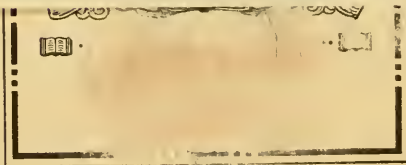
By JOHN D. WELLS



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Swazy Folks

And Others

Poems by JOHN D. WELLS



WITH DRAWINGS BY
ALBERT MACK STERLING



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To my wife and little daughters
this book of verse is affection-
ately dedicated. J. D. W.

Preface

A GOOD friend has made objections to the title of this book, saying: "People don't know where Swazy is!" O, but they do! Every one has his Swazy—*long "a," please, as in "hayin'."* Every one knows that Swazy is any place where the population is sparse, where the cider mill and the shingle factory mark the line where the village leaves off and the open country begins; where "Town Meetin'" and Firemen's Day mark the cycle of time; where quoit pitching in the Methodist churchsheds and Sam Scribner's Wagon Circus leaven honest toil and the even-tenored lives of the village "folks." O, yes, almost every man, who has ever made much of a success of things, *came* from a Swazy, somewhere.

As for "the others," whose lives or stories are herein rhymed, they are people whom we have all met—soldiers, range-riders, sailors, "gods of the open air." Lastly, not a few of the verses are about children, the merry little souls who stand in the fields of Youth and watch us as we pass along the Path of Reality, turning bright faces to us for the instant and making us happier for it.

These verses are assembled here to satisfy a call by friends to see some of the poems in permanent form. This was as much a surprise to their sponsor as to his most unfriendly critic, and, withal, a compliment so flattering that it demands compliance. For the most part, the verses have appeared in a special column on the editorial page of the Buffalo Evening *News*, called "From Grave to Gay," which it has been the author's pleasure to edit for the past five years. To the owner of the *News*, Mr. Edward H. Butler, the writer is indebted for permission to reprint here, as well as for many kindnesses and a generous friendship that has made his service on the *News* most enjoyable.

J. D. W.

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“Howdy!”

I'M shy on formal greetin's—as it's give me tew
 observe,
 Them highfalutin' kowtows in the end kin on'y
 serve
 T' make a man suspicion, who's been off fer quite
 a dost,
 He's jest about half welcome, er th'ee quarters
 at the most;
 I tell y' what I 'preciate if I've been off a spell,
 An' meet some man er uther 'at I've knowed purty
 well,
 Is when he gits his bearin's and he sashays up
 t' me
 An' grabs me by the flipper, an' then he sez—
 sez he:

“*Howdy!*”

It ain't no satisfaction, when yer back from furrin
 parts,
 T' have yer nayburs greet ye with new-fangled
delly sartes—
 There's sumptin' “milk-an'-watery” that goes
 agin my grain
 In them 'ere sort o' greetin's, makes me want t'
 go again—
 A sumptin' sort o' chilly an' onhullsome, I'm
 doggone,
 That allus made me wonder if it wasn't jest put
 on!
 They ain't no fair comparison, that I have ever
 heard,
 Betwixt them formal things y' hear an' that one
 friendly word:

“*Howdy!*”

There's nuthin' pitifuller, than a man 'ats got t'
 roam—
 Er nuthin' more pathetiker than when a man
 comes home;
 I 'low there's sumpthin' simple—sumpthin' home-
 lylike—in it,
 A simple sort o' greetin' is the on'y kind'll fit;
 Jest clasp his hand in yourn an' you give it lots
 o' heft,
 'N he'll think you've thought about him ever'
 minnit since he left,
 An' now, that he is back agin, he's welcome
 as the birds,
 Then make his joy completer with that friendliest
 of words:

"Howdy!"

The Dreamer.

THEY said he lived in vain,
 But, when he died,
 The gentle skies shed tears of rain—
 Those skies 'neath which he dreamed, and fain
 Would roam and dream beneath again—
 And children cried.

They said he lived for none,
 But, when he left,
 The buds that 'long his path had blown,
 And all he loved and called his own,
 Did bow their pretty heads and moan
 Like souls bereft.

They cannot see, who said
 He lived for none,
 That yonder woodland stream that led
 Along the path he loved to tread,
 Has ceased its song and sighs instead,
 For one who's gone.

They cannot know who play
 There is no gain
 In living thus each joyous day
 In dreams of never-ending May,
 They cannot know—or would not say
 He lived in vain!

Bilin' Sap.

WHEN Natcher's bustin' out her pod,
 An' thoughts stirs up a feller's chest
 Of spring, an' hawsses turnin' sod,
 O them's the days I like the best!
 The days that I kin shet my noise
 An' jist lay back an' pitcher pap
 An' us an' all them Burton boys
 In Gullen's woods * * a-bilin' sap!

I hain't no hand, an' never was,
 T' sling air native langwidge much,
 Ner pitcher dreams ner fancies, 'cause
 Y' see I wa'n't cut out fer such;
 An' days like this, doggone it, I
 Kin see I need most every scrap
 Of langwidge tew do justice by
 A day like this * * an' bilin' sap!

By hick'ry, I kin shet my eyes
 An' see that camp ez plain, I vum!
 It seems such mem'ries never dies
 But sticks to us twell kingdom cum!—
 An' see them pails an' kettle there,
 With golden sirup bubblin' in—
 It allus 'minded me, I sware,
 That pancake time wud cum agin!

I s'pose that somewheres there's a tree
 In Gullen's woods—not more'n one,
 Fer Gullen's woods that *used t'* be
 Air all cut down fer ages gone—
 I s'pose that sumwheres there's a tree,
 A day like this, that's running sap;
 I like t' think it weeps fer me,
 An' all them Burton boys—an' pap!

At Court.

AT court no royal splendor rules,
 No ermine mantles robe the King—
 His crown is made of mother's spools
 Encircled on a gaudy string.

With rattle-box for sceptre he
 Makes ready for his kingly nap,
 And summons each to bend a knee
 Before the throne on mother's lap.

For we the monarch's subjects be—
 In servitude, abject, we kneel;
 A weak and humble legion, we,
 Oppressed beneath his rosy heel.

And I am Jester to the King!
 I put aside my tricks and wiles—
 A jumping-jack upon a string,
 It takes to coax the monarch's smiles.

I shake my jester's bells and strings—
 The monarch shouts in childish glee—
 His laughter through the nursery rings
 Far sweeter than a king's could be.

But, hold, we bore the King, I own;
 "We pray the Lord his soul to keep,"
 Tread lightly here around the throne—
 The King's asleep—the King's asleep!

Wishes.

STAR light, star bright,
First star I've seen tonight—
I wish I may, I wish I might
Have the wish I wish tonight!

Wish, you, then, my little elf,
That you always stay yourself—
Wish to keep each golden curl—
Be, for aye, a little girl.

Wish to keep your childish glee,
And the smiles you've smiled for me—
Wish to keep your bonny eyes,
Clear and blue as shining skies.

Wish to keep your lightened heart,
All your baby charms and art—
Keep you all your ways and wiles,
Dimpled hands and dimpled smiles.

Wish—I would that it could be!—
You might romp for aye with me,
Through the day from early dawn,
As you are—until I'm gone!

Star light, star bright,
First star I've seen tonight—
I wish you may, I wish you might
Have the wish I wish tonight!

Old Letters.

FADED letters; How I love them!
 Why they seem to touch a string
 On the harpsichord of mem'ry
 'Till the hosts of angels sing!—
 Sing to me of loved ones, and the
 Hands that penned each loving line,
 Seem to reach across the chasm
 And I clasp them close in mine.

Faded letters! From a sweetheart—
 From a mother, dear to me—
 From a brother, and another
 Far across the briny sea—
 From a wife, she sent to cheer me
 In a strange and foreign land,
 And, the best of all, the letter
 Where she traced the baby's hand.

Chubby fingers! How I loved them!
 How the fleeting years efface!
 Or, is it my tears, I wonder,
 That bedim the loving trace?
 Though the cheerless years are many
 Since we worshipped at his shrine,
 Still I feel those little fingers
 Close around this heart of mine!

Faded letters! How I love them!
 Letters from my loved ones and
 This, the best of all, the letter
 Where she traced the baby's hand;
 Little imprint on the paper
 And upon my heart, I fear,
 Sets the harpsichord of mem'ry
 Playing music sweet to hear!

The Kettle Song.

I wish the kettle would sing again
Just as it used to do;
I wish it would sing of a lion slain—
Of a pirate crew on the Spanish main—
Of a clipper ship on the sea-way, high,
With a cabin boy and the Boy was I—
Just as it used to do.

I wish the kettle would sing again,
Just as it used to do,
Of a little girl in a bonnet, red,
And saved by a prince from a hydra-head
That lurked in the corn that towered high,
And the girl was She and the Prince was I—
Just as it used to do.

I wish the kettle would sing again,
Just as it used to do—
I wish it would sing of war's alarms,
The booming of cannon and clash of arms
Of a blue-clad boy where the strife ran high
With face to the steel and willing to die—
Just as it used to do.

I wish the kettle would sing again,
Just as it used to do,
The lyrics it crooned and the tales it told—
But the hearth is chill, and the years are old—
The fancies it whispered have all taken wing
And never again will the kettle sing
Just as it used to do!



The Kettle's Song

The Street Musician.

A vagabond! A rover in the street,
 A derelict upon a human sea,
 And scorned by those who passed with hurried feet,
 Who heeded not, nor heard, his piteous plea!
 But, O the song from his old violin,
 It reached the spot my mem'ries linger in!

He touched the strings as if with magic bow,
 And sweet it crooned above the din and all;
 It seemed to come from, O, so long ago,
 Across the years, a sympathetic call!
 It sang a song of fields and pleasant ways,
 And faces sweet I knew in other days.

It called across the tortuous winding span
 That I have trod so long with wearied feet—
 The rocky path that leads from boy to man;
 He sang the song, so beautiful and sweet,
 That's writ for those who have to sigh and roam;
 "I Wonder, Do They Miss Their Boy At Home?"

A vagabond, 'tis true, but glorified
 By those sweet strains from his old violin,
 That called across Time's chasm, deep and wide,
 And reached the spot my mem'ries linger in!
 To think, this homeless soul remembers yet,
 While I, who have a home, so soon forget!

The Town Marshal.

THE time the corkus 'lected Jim
 Town marshal, fokes jumped ont' him,
 An' 'lowed the job pervided fer
 A man a heap more compenter
 'N what he wuz. But I-sez-I:
 "Well, ennyway, give Jim a try";
 (All thue the army him an' me
 Wuz pardners, so I knowed, y' see.)

They 'low he *bain't* no great success
 Ez marshal, an' he hain't, I gess;
 Fokes criticize him 'cause he plays
 "Ol' sledge" an' euchre stormy days
 An' chillin' nights, with them 'ats in
 The lockup fer some triflin' sin;
 But they don't know, ez Jim tells me;
 "It sort o' keeps 'em company."

When Abner cum on Widder Crumb—
 Told Jim t' fo'close on her hum
 Fer debts her man made 'fore he died,
 There's no one knowed who satisfied
 Ab's claim, er cares to, nuther, fer
 It cleared an' saved her farm fer her—
 But I've got strong suspicionment
Of how an' whare Jim's pension went!

Big-hearted, hullsome, ornery Jim!
 If fokes jes' knowed ez I know him,
 They'd vote fer him an' vote him straight
 Fer Keeper of the Golden Gate
 Er 'Cordin' Angel, er, I swear,
 Fer a'most enny place Up Thare!
 (All thue the army him an' me
 Wuz pardners, so I knowed, y' see!)

'Twixt Seasons at Swazy.

I tell y' what I like t' do
 Along when March is gettin' 'thue,
 Er Aprile's just beginnin'—
 The cur'ousest time o' all the year,
 When winter's gone an' spring ain't here,
 An' snow is sort o' thinnin',

I like t' wander—romancin'—
 I s'pose they's really no sense in
 Such takin's-on an' goin',
 But yender is the place fer me,
 Whare ellums, oaks, an' maples be,
 An' whare the southwind's blowin'!

It seems t' whisper—that's a fack—
 O' sum ol' friend that's cummin' back,
 A-bringin' loads o' treasure,
 O' golden sunshine, greenest grass,
 An' wortermelons, garden sass,
 An' all in heapin' measure.

It hints the smallest circumstance—
 A Bob White on the pastcher fence
 A-chirpin', rich an' meller;
 An' all the pleasures yit t' cum
 A-straddle this southwind! I vum
 It sort o' chokes a feller!

From ever' tarnal limb so bare
 The sap's a-drippin', an' though there
 'S no way of mortils knowin',
 I believe them's tears o' joy, by cuss—
 That Natcher's glad fer spring as us—
 An' that's her way o' showin'!

Leave My Dreams to Me.

I want but little here below, just let me have
 my dreams,
 And you may keep the gold and dross, and all
 the petty schemes
 That men conceive, in Greed and Gain, to foist
 on fellow men—
 Just let me be a pilgrim, lone, to love and dream
 again

Of hollyhocks
 In riot, red,
 A puncheon floor—
 A trundle bed—

And things I love and cherish now, that looked so
 homely then.

Just place me where my easy chair shall face the
 evening's glow,
 Where pictures form with magic art as fancies
 come and go,
 And all the paths that lead away guide weary
 pilgrims' feet
 To cottages with open doors where love and
 friendship meet—

A humble roof—
 The song of birds—
 The welcome low
 Of distant herds,

And roses grow around the home and drip their
 fragrance sweet.



The Place of Dream

And open wide the ancient door, so vagrant
winds that blow
May bear the music back to me—the songs of
long ago—
And echo children's voices—songs of happiness
and glee,—
All silent now these many years—and for Eternity;
 Then leave me here
 To dream and rest,
 With eyes upon
 The dying west—
Take all the wealth the world affords but leave
my dreams to me!

Grandpa.

Dranpa Jones has tum to stay
 'Since my dranma went away—
 Tuz it ain't so lonesome ez
 Whare he used to live, he sez;
 Tells me bestest stories, tuz
 They's about when wartime wuz!

Wartime wuz long time ago
 'Fore my dranpa ever know
 Who my papa wuz, an' he
 Didn't know my ma or me
 When the wartime wuz, becuz
 We wa'n't here when wartime wuz.

Sumtimes when my dranpa goes
 Upstairs where his hat an' clothes
 'At he weared when wartime is,
 'S packed away with fings of his,
 I peek through the door an' see
 Mostest fun they ever be!

Puts his fixin's on an' nen
 Just tromps back an' forth again
 'Fore ma's lookin' glass becuz
 'Ats like when the wartime wuz;
 Nen he stops an' wipes his eyes—
 First I know he cries an' cries!

'Nen I speak to him an' he
 Pats my head an' says I be.
 'Staken—them wuz tears of joy;
 "Dranpa never cries, my boy!"
 Nen we bof git laffin' nen
 Us twø goes down stairs again.

Susan Serepty Perkins.

(A few lines of appresheashun of one of Natcher's noble-wimmin that I've knowed fer quite a spell an' have wanted to say sumthin about, but didn't dast. Now she's visitun out to her mother's cousin in Iowy and I don't cakalate she'll see my humble efforts.)

THEY ain't no words that's got a edge
 'At's soft enuff, in langiwedge,
 T' tell her virtues as they be,
 Ner give no adekate idee
 Of Widder Perkin's dorter Sue,
 Ner praise her as I'd like t' do.

It goes way back—less see—about
 The 60's when the war bruk out
 An' things looked dark an' drafts begun;
 The widder's husband, Sile, was one
 That left his wife an' Susie, then
 She wasn't more n' nine er ten.

Just thinkin' on't, seems t' me
 It wa'n't but only yisterdy
 I heerd the fifes cum screechin' down,
 An' Himeses Guards frum Burgettstown
 Marched past whare Silas' fambly wep'
 An' he fell in an' caught the step.

I see him yit, as plain as day,
 A-smilin' in his happy way—
 A-smilin' as he kissed each head
 An' helt their hands a spell, an' said,
 With honest tears a-streamin' thue:
 "Take keer o' mother, won't y' Sue."

An' then he went! Fer quite a spell
 They wasn't news enuff t' tell
 Er specify, er seemed t' keer
 How fared our army boys frum here,
 Till Petersburg, an' then it said
 That, 'mongst the others, Sile was dead!

"Take keer o' mother." Then they cum—
 Her father's words when he left hum
 An' marched away; an', lawsy me,
 As it's been given me t' see,
 Rite thare her girlhood cum t' end
 An' Susan growed t' comprehend!

"Take keer o' mother." All these years
 I 'low them words 's rung in her ears—
 In Susan's ears, an' there at hum
 She's staid an' worked an' heeded 'em
 Like me an' you an' ever'one
 Of our acquaintance *wouldn't* done!

There's sum ol' maids, an' then again
 There's sum as is that mightn't been
 Onless, like Susan, they cud view
 Their duty, plain, an' meet it, too;
 An' if she's single tain't because
 She hain't been asked—*I know she was!*

Brother Mine.

JUST like we used to, brother mine,
 Let's wander back again—
 Let's turn our steps from busy mart
 To meet there where our pathways part,
 And then go back—my hand in thine—
 Forgetting we are men.

Just like we used to, brother dear,
 Let's link our hearts with joy,
 A-down the lanes and pleasant ways
 We knew and loved in boyhood days—
 Forget the world is old and drear
 And be again a boy.

Let's wander back again, we two,
 Beside the silvery stream—
 Beside the wood where mystery lies—
 Beneath the kindly summer skies
 With sunbeams glancing dancing through,
 And rest again, and dream.

Let's wander back again and see
 The homestead, where, today
 The flowers weep for one Above
 And seem to breathe her mother love—
 She cherished them so tenderly
 Before she went away!

Let's wander back, O brother mine,
 And never more to roam;
 With all our boyhood shrines around
 Let's kneel beside her grassy mound
 And tell her, through the whisp'ring pine,
 Her children have come home.

The Children of Poverty Lane.

BLITHE little spirits of Poverty Lane,
Down through the years they come running
again!

Faces as red as the pokeberries' glow,
Happy and cheerful as any I know;
Poverty stricken and curbed, but it seemed
Never to darken the dreams that they dreamed—
Never to sadden the smiles that they smiled—
Want touches lightly the heart of a child!

Lived in the huts at the edge of the wood,
Back from the road where the landowners' stood;
Quaint little houses with little above—
Little within but a surfeit of love;
Happy and cheerful and careless and free,
Now through the years they come running to me—
Still they are happy, their smiles never wane,
Dear little children of Poverty Lane.

Ho, I recall them, remember them still,
Barefoot and happy, afoot to the mill—
Grist going through, or the wheel going 'round,
Gave them more joy than verses can bound;
Ho, I can see them in gingham that glowed
'Gainst the red sumachs that guarded the road—
Homeward and happy they trundled again,
Dear little children of Poverty Lane!

Dear little scions of poverty's child,
Blithe as a bird of the wood, and as wild,
Bubbling over with laughter and glee,
You taught a lesson 'twas lasting to me—
Taught me 'tis best to forgive the world's taunt—
Taught me "be happy in riches or want";
Ho, I am happy to see you again,
Dear little children of Poverty Lane!

Old Fire Company.

I dreamt last night! Hain't it the beatenest
 The things a feller'll dream about, an' jest
 Ez natural-like, an' perfeck, I declare,
 A'most ez if a man was really there!
 Like when I dreamt last night, I seemed t' see
 Ez plain ez day, ol' fi-er company
 Of volunteers we used t' have 'round here
 That's been disbanded now fer twenty year.

It seemed I 'us back a-sleepin' 'neath the eaves—
 The night was still—so still the lokus leaves
 A-droppin' on the roof, I heerd wunct more
 As I have heerd a thousant times before;
 Somebody passed—I heerd 'em holler "Fi-er!"
 I seemed t' see the flames a-leapin' higher,
 A lurid glow, an' then I heerd the call—
 The fire bell in air ol' Village Hall.

Well I tell you, it wa'n't no circumstance,
 The time I spent a-gittin' in my pants
 An' histin' up my winder, no sir-e-e-e
 An' naybors' folks was doin' same ez me,
 A-histin' up *their* winders quick ez scat,
 An' lookin' out an' astin': "Where's it at?"
 Till someone sed, frum where *he* stood it 'peared
 "The Baptist sheds was burnin' up, he feared."

An' then, thue all my dream, cum to my ears
 The warnin' bell of air ol' volunteers
 With Hi ahead, an' Henry Smith an' Tup
 An' others takin' holt, ez they ketched up
 Of that ol' hand injine. It seemed that it
 Fair seemed t' snort fer jist a chanct t' git
 At one more fire! An' then cum 'Vester Ladd
 Nigh petered out, his asthmay got so bad!

I follered 'em an' legged it down the road,
 Like years ago when we was boys an' go-ed
 T' fires nights, an' never missed a thing—
 A habit that has left us now, I jing!
 An' there they was, a-fightin' flames again
 An' Hi a-callin' loudly: "Water, men!"

* * * * *

Them words they woke me up an', jiminey,
 'Twas stormin' hard, *an' rainin' in on me!*

Lessons.

I RECKON y'll find wharever y' look
 A lesson in all that y' see,
 As I allus do. That ornery 'Ras Jones,
 He larned a lesson t' me
 When he seed a beetle sprawled out on its back
 'N he stopped; "I reckon," sez 'Ras,
 "I'll turn him over and give him a chancet
 With other bugs in his class."

It's a tolo'ble world—a purty fair world,
 But a heap less o' smiling than tears,
 'N it's all our own fault. When a man sort o' fails
 It seems as if nobody keers;
 Y' cud help it a lot—jist give him yer hand
 'N remember that lesson of 'Ras —
 Stand him up on his laigs and give him a chancet
 With other men in his class!

A Birthday.

SHE'S six today! She climbed my knee and
 twined her arms about me, so,
 And whispered to me, joyously: "I bet you dad,
 that you don't know
 What day this is!" I feigned to think, though
 well I knew what she would say,
 And shammed surprise when she exclaimed: "I'm
 growing up—I'm six today!"
 What is it, when the years come on, that holds a
 man and makes his heart
 To soften toward a little child and makes the
 tears so quick to start!

I had not noticed it before! I did not think until
 today!
 Her playroom's strangely silent now, her paper
 dollies laid away!
 The little finger marks we loved are gone from
 off the window sill—
 Beneath the blossomed apple tree the swing I
 made is strangely still,
 And silence hovers 'round the house, unbroken
 by her childish glee—
 She's six today, and growing up! No more a
 little babe to me!

You're six today! Come, kiss your dad and hug
 him, too, you little elf,
 And romp with him and play with him nor ask
 him why he's not himself!
 Just follow him where'er he goes and let him take
 your little hand—
 Don't ask him what he's thinking of—you wouldn't
 know or understand!
 Let's go together down the lane, a-romping in
 your child-heart way—
 We cannot play like this for long! You're growing
 up—you're six today!

The Lonesome Time o' Night.

THERE is sometimes in the evenin' jist beyant
 the aidge of day
 When the whipperwills is "whipperwillin"
 yender in the gum,
 An' the cattle air a-chankin' in their shif'less sort
 o' way,
 An' most ever'thing that's kumpany is sort
 o' laid out dumb—
 Oh, it's then a feller's feelin's seem t' sumhow
 gee an' haw,
 An' there's sumpin seems t' bubble up an'
 clog his wizen tight—
 Mother takes my hand in hern an' she kind o'
 whispers: "Paw,
 Ain't this * * * * a lonesome time o'
 night."

Round the house there's shadders flittin'—we
 can't see 'em, maw er me,
 But there's sumpin tells the both of us they
 hover 'round our chair—
 Of a little brood o' childurn Heaven sent t' sich
 as we,
 An' we loved 'em O so happy-like untwell
 He took 'em There!
 An' it left us sort o' gropin' fer the things we
 cudn't see;
 Though I'm past a-faultin' Providence, it
 didn't seem jist right—
 An' I know that maw thinks on it when she whis-
 pers low t' me:
 "Ain't this * * * * a lonesome time o'
 night."



The Lonesome Time o' Night

We are agein,' me an' mother, an' we're turnin'
in the lane—

We are reachin' what the deacon calls the end
o' airthly strife;

An' this silent evenin' hour now, strikes me purty
plain

As the correspondin' time o' day that we have
reached in life,

An' we hain't a chick ner grandchild for t' sum-
how sort o' save

These 'ere few remainin' minits an' to smile an'
make 'em bright;

An' I know that maw thinks on it when she whis-
pers to me: "Dave,

Ain't this * * * * a lonesome time o'
night."

The Hushed Voice.

WHAT mother said—it didn't matter then,
A loving word, perchance, and then again,
When childish wrath came in our simple play
And little woes beset Youth's rosy way,
Her sweetly gentle words dispelled the wrath,
And coaxed the buds to bloom along our path;
Her voice was sweet to greet the morning sun,
And, sweeter still, when Golden Days were done,
Her soft good night that sent us to our bed—
It didn't matter then—what mother said.

It didn't matter then, but now she's gone
The world lacks all its sweetness, and, at dawn
The sunbeams, coming down from Heaven's dome,
But emphasize the loss from out the home;
No kindly smiles to cheer the passing day—
No mother-words to guide us on the way—
No loving arms that wait but to enfold
When world and all grow merciless and cold;
The Kingdom There, I think, is made of such—
What mother said! O now 'twould mean so
much!

“Yender.”

“IT’S better hoein’ yender—
 Fer they ain’t no stones t’ hender,”
 The words that Silas Higginbotham allus sez t’ me;
 “Th’ patch that we’re a-hoein’
 Is th’ wust they is a-goin’—
 It’s better over yender, boy,” Silas sez, sez he.

“Th’ clouds is breakin’ yender—
 I was ’feared th’ shower ’d hender
 Air work t’day, ’ sez Silas, kind o’ happy-like, t’ me;
 “I thort th’ rain had found us,
 But I gess it’s goin’ ’round us—
 A-goin’ way off yender, boy,” Silas sez, sez he.

Lor’ bless sich men ez Silas,
 Teachin’ trouble not t’ rile us—
 Lor’ fill ’em full o’ blessin’s jist ez full ez theykin be;
 Them folks, so good an’ tender,
 That see better things off yender,
 Th’ same ez Silas Higginbotham allus shows t’ me!

“The Conversazzhony.”

A “conversazzhony” is a certain line o’ talk
 At which a man with work t’ do is purty
 apt t’ balk;
 It takes frum four t’ six or eight who’d ruther loaf
 than not—
 Whose ock-y-pation principally is keepin’ chair-
 seats hot;
 ’Twas started by a poet wunct—the late laymented
 Field—
 (Of all his seeds o’ trubble it has showed the
 biggest yield!)
 The which is appertainin’. Why, I’ll bet Field’s
 heart repines
 If he has heard of that one we pulled off at Bob
 Devine’s!

There was Bates, that quiet oracle of wagon
 circus days,
 An’ Arlt, who has Munchausen beat in forty
 different ways,
 An’ Willyums, who has frequent ranged from
 here t’ Timbuctoo,
 An’ Phillips, Kell of “Lunnon, West,” and Joey
 Murray, too;
 But they was merely *nominal*, who cum t’ see—an’
saw—
 The ones who railly give our “conversazzhony”
eclaw
 Was one named Martin Talbot, who cum here
 frum County Clare,
 An’ Kempner, late of Palestine, who ock-y-pied
 the chair.

We settled of the tarriff as sich meetin's allus do—
 At 10 o'clock we'd fixed up all the worldly ills
 but two!

The neb-u-lar hy-poth-e-sis was pendin' with us
 still,

When suddint-like we switched an' traced the
 tribes o' Israel;

An' then there's sumthin' happened that I cayn't
 nowise explain,

An' ever' time I think on it, it gives me rackin'
 pain!

Just like a fork o' lightenin' it cum a-crashin'
 through—

*Our chairman, Simon Kempner, sed Saint Patrick
 was a Jew!*

You've seen Missury mules that was startled in
 their rest?

You've set down absent-minded on a yaller-jacket's
 nest?

You've braved a buck-sheep stampede when they
 cum in twos an' threes?

You've give min-ute attenshun to the bizness
 ends o' bees?

If not I'm wastin' paper, fer no common ornery
 pen

Pervides no real ideer of what happened there
 an' then!!

*The airth it turned an' sashayed, an' the air a
 greenish hue,*

*When chairman Simon Kempner sed Saint Patrick
 was a Jew!*

The Dutch made fer the cellar an' us natives fer
 the stairs,
 An' left our tales behind us with our coats an'
 vacant chairs,
 The English jined the Germans, an' the Swedes
 went up above,
 Our chairman took t' cover 'neath a cordial red-
 hot stove!
 Within that cleared em-por-ium, a sight fer gods
 so rare,
 We caught a glimpse o' Talbot, who cum here
 frum County Clare,
 An' swearin' by the powers that if Simon's tale
 was right—
 That Patrick *was* a Semite—*he wud paint the*
emerald white!

ENVOI.

The certain sort o' moral that I've aimed fer in
 these lines
 Is "the place fer conversazzhonies" is *not* in
 Bob Devine's,
 Ner ennywhere ner ennytime, with safety, I'll be
 bound,
When there's a Semite in the chair an' Irishmen
around!

The Blues.

TELL you what, but yesterday
 I wuz blue!—git that-a-way
 Jist about so often, an'
 Lord, how it upsets a man!

When I had that tarnal fit
 'Bout ez bad ez I cud git,
 Heerd a man cum up behind
 Thumpin' long the pathway—blind!

Blind 's a stun! An' durn my hide
 He was chipper too, beside
 What I wuz, an' cudn't see
 Railyly *why* the blues shud be!

To myself I sez, sez I:
 "You're too durned ongrateful, Hi—
 'Pears you'd orter have your pants
 Kicked beyant all circumstance!"

Then the sun shun out on high
 Drivin' out the blues, an' I
 'S glad I wa'n't that man behind,
 Thumpin' 'long the pathway—blind!

A Song.

FAR set in all this Song of Life
 That thrills our hearts and tones the strife,
 There is a dainty measure—
 A pleasant, soft and happy trill
 To match the song of Whip-o'-r-Will;
 It's sadly sweet and distant, still,
 It ever sings of pleasure.

Above the ribald song of Greed,
 Above the wail of Tears and Need,
 It soars, ever higher;
 As clear as bells or pipes of Pan,
 It sings a song to every man
 Of woodlands, still, where brooklets ran,
 Of running vines and briar.

As wild a song as mind could dream,
 It sings some merry, madcap theme,
 Then softly dropping, toning,
 It croons of amber autumn days,
 Or of a cot, where childhood plays
 By clover fields and pleasant ways,
 And burdened bees a-droning.

Alone, in all this Song of Life,
 This dainty measure tempers strife
 And smooths the roughest places—
 A strain as clear as silver bells
 That echoes through sweet mem'ry's dells
 And seeks us out—the song that tells
 Of other days and faces.

In the Toy Shop.

I MET him alone in the toy shop,
A pixy all dimples and curls and eyes,
Reflecting there, like a dewey drop,
His cheery face and his glad surprise;
He took my hand and he led me through
The Land of Tinsel and Penny Schemes—
He didn't know, but he led me to
The cherished land of my boyhood dreams!

What wondrous sights are there to see—
The beasts and birds of the farthest climes,
Ferocious and stealthy, yet seem to be
All set to the music of soothing rhymes;
What wondrous books in the Land of Boys!
What marvelous tales of the witches told!
How much there is in the Land of Toys
To cheer a heart that seems growing old!

We wandered alone, we two, by ways
That led us by castles of gold and paint,
And on and on till the world was haze
And din of traffic was far and faint;
We came to a strange uncharted moat
Where leaden soldiers stood guard, and then
We sailed away in a pea-green boat
To lands of Never Can Be Again.

We floated on 'neath the dreamiest skies,
Past islands of wood and painted grass,
And fishes looked up, in dumb surprise,
From sea-green depths of a looking-glass;
The breezes veered, and we turned our prow,
His chubby hands brought our ship to stop,
The anchor dropped o'er our painted bow—
At home at last in the Toy Shop!

But O what we saw in that wondrous land,
Not strange that it wearied a lad so small!
He pillowed his head on my shoulder and
Went out of the world of tinsel and all;
Ah, sleep little chap, where the fairies spin gold,
May dreams never end and your youth never
stop—
Today you have taught me this heart isn't old!
Bless all little boys and the toy shop!

Genywine Joy.

YO-HUM, yo-hey, a lazy day
With sky-fleece skimmin' over
The fields an' trees, an' honey bees
A-dippin' in the clover;
Then sky an' sod's akin to God,
An' ever'thing of beauty
'Ll smile at you—*an' mean it, too—*
As if it was a duty.

O them's the times I live in rhymes—
When Natcher seems to grow 'em;
When all y' see 'll seem t' be
A part of Natcher's poem;
When weed an' rose an' all that grows,
An' yeller birds a-wingin',
An' fields an' trees an' honey bees
Was fairly made fer singing!

I allus feel I want t' steal
Out yenderwards an' waller—
Stretch out sum place an' squint my face
An' watch the sky-fleece foller;
An' loaf a bit—an' dream of it—
It makes me feel fergivin'—
I 'preciate my happy state
An' much obleeeged fer livin'!

Triolet—to Her.

WHEN she comes tripping down the street
I fear I lose my head a bit—
So blithely move her dainty feet;
(She is, in truth, a coquette sweet!)
It's always me she comes to meet—
My heart is lost—she's captured it;
When she comes tripping down the street
I fear I lose my head a bit!

She gives me first a dainty kiss;
To hide my joy I do not strive;
My word, but she's an artful miss
To win me thus with just a kiss—
No shallow, passing love-match this!
It may be bold, but, sakes alive,
Why should she *not* greet me like this,
You see, she's mine—and *only five*!



The Coquette

Pajamas at Traverse.

JOE FULLER wuz a decent cuss an' good t'
man er beast—

Abarrin' sum ascendants that was livin' in the East
He cudn't nowise help ner stand—he w'an't t'
blame, y' know—

They wa'n't no man on Stinkin' Creek more
peaceabler than Joe;

The effete East 's what broke him—it will any
man, I gess;

His doom cum in a package that he got by Hank's
express.

He got a stock o' licker, an' with package on
his arm,

He lit straight out o' Traverse like he'd answered
hell's alarm!

'Tware jest th' day a-followin' 'n purty nigh ez
hot 's

That other place, when all us boys at Sandy Bill's
heerd shots

'N a cloud o' dust was cumin' down th' trail frum
Stinkin' Creek—

A-howlin', shootin', sumthin' that wuz actin' like
ol' Nick!

'N, stranger, it went by us like a striped an' check-
ered streak!

Bill Sanders (he wuz marshal then) allowed t'
take a peek,

'N turned so white thet common chalk wud marked
him black ez coal,

“Unless I'm goin' daffy, boys, that streak that
passed wuz Joel!”

'N Joe it wuz! 'N, stranger, how he scandalized
that town
In them ondecnt clothes of his a-ridin' up an'
down
An' drunk ez seven dollars, an' ashootin' every
chance—
'N (shameful cuss) a-wearin' of his shirt outside
his pants!
His outfit it wuz striped, an' thinks I: "Th' durn
galoot
'S been shootin' up sum China boy 'n took his
clothes t' boot!"
We thought he'd gone plum loco an' when Joe rode
past agin,
We plugged him. When we reached him why
poor Joe wuz cashin' in!

He 'lowed that he forguve us—sez: "I gess yew
boys dun right—
I wore these togs in daytime but I gess they're
meant fer night;
But bear in mind, yew fellers, if yew see their
likes agin,
Back East they're called "pajammers," an' with
that poor Joe cashed in!
We buried him at Traverse an we marked it with
sum boards—
Th' words w'an't literary, but th' best cowland
affords;
We cut 'em with a Barlow: "Here lies Highfalutin'
Joe—
He wore th' first pajammers west of Kansas City,
Mo."

The Chanty Song.

I watched at the tide where a good ship lay
 So eager to be on her trackless way—
 I heard the song of her toiling crew,
 The chanty her sail was lifted to:
 “Yo— yo he— yo he-e-e—
 Born of the bounding sea—
 Clear and away
 Of the land today—
 Yo— yo he— yo he-e-e—”
 And all together they hauled it home,
 Till, white as snow against Heaven’s dome,
 It spread to the breeze for the homeward run
 On the golden path of the setting sun.

That men, the spawn of this worldly strife,
 Might take the chanty-men’s way of life!
 And make the road, as they go along,
 An easier one with a chanty song:
 “Yo— yo he— yo he-e-e—
 Each a brother be,
 Ever to seek
 And help the weak—
 Yo— yo he— yo he-e-e—”
 And pull each man for the other’s good,
 Till life is one sweet brotherhood,
 And we hoist our sails for the Homeward run
 In the Golden Path of the Setting Sun!

The Windows of My Memory.

THE windows of my men'ry, overlooking gar-
dens fair

Where dear old friends and faces live among the
blossoms there—

Where all the recollections that I've cherished
tenderly,

Have lived in tinted roses and are blooming just
for me.

They look out on the mountains tops, the valleys
and the streams,

Where childhood, O so happy, lived that distant
day of dreams—

Where things so poor and homely, all became a
cherished part

Of Love, and lingered ever in a weary wand'rer's
heart.

They look out on the passes, and the lanes and
quiet ways,

Where daisies kissed my weary feet in those all-
golden days—

The pathway, so seductive, leading to the world
of men—

Another, leading homeward, that I'll never trod
again!

The windows of my memory! Each precious little
square

Reflects some cherished picture that I knew and
loved Back There—

Fair visions that I fain would keep, but gradually
they wane—

I cannot see beyond the tears that splash the
window pane!

The Old Tramp Printer.

(The reflections of a country editor.)

THE old tramp print! What's come o' him,
 Who dropped around 'bout wunst a year
 In times gone by? That *cherubim*
 We use t' see, half full o' cheer
 An' railroad cinders—land o' love
 He's tall's a pole an' jest as ga'nt,
 And looked like sixteenth cousin of
 Sum boardin' house, er rest-er-rant!

He'd walk right in an' git t' biz
 An' choose sum absent feller's case
 Ferever like the shop was his
 An' that was his pre-empted place,
 An' never say a word! But then
 It allus seemed he'd timed it so'st
 He'd git to us most usual when
 We seemed t' want an' need him most.

The dust of many climes lay brown
 Upon his shoes; he used t' say
 That some was there from every town
 From Maine t' Cal-i-forn-i-a;
 Perhaps his morals *wa'n't* the best,
 Ner enny speshul good t' us,
 But we could overlook the rest
 In such an' interestin' cuss.

There has been times, in twilight, when
He felt right lonesome here, I gess,
'Mongst strangers, when he'd take my pen
An' write rare lines of tenderness,
Of mother, home an' faces fair
An' fadin' dreams of other days,
An' then I've knowed some good was there
Behind his wild an' rovin' ways!

But now he's gone, an' sometimes when
The paper's out an' all is still,
I seem t' hark back there again,
An' my ol' wizzen seems t' fill;
He wa'n't just what a man should be—
No doubt o' that—but when I look
There's sumthin' hurts me when I see
That "30" 's missin' off his hook!

Doggone Homesick!

(Lines written on the final leaf of James Whitcomb Riley's
"Farm Rhymes.")

THE book is shet! I've closed the kivers down,
It seems t' me on friends ez real an' true
Ez them I knowed afore I moved t' town,
An' nigh fergot—the simpul fokes 'at you
Have set t' rhyme without no jarrin' soun',
So keerlesslike—an' sweeter fer it, too.

The book is shet, an' still the rhyme child romps
Across each page, ez happy-like ez when
He helt my hand, an' ol' Ben Johnson tromps
His fiddle strings, ez dreamylike ez then;
An' list'nin' I kin hear 'em callin' Thomps,
An' paw an' maw, frum Bethel Hill again!

The book is shet! I feel jist like I feel
When evenin' ends a shinin' Apurl day—
There's sumpthin' in it allus seems t' keel
My feelin's down, like dolls on circus day
At three fer five; I swan, I want t' steal
Back home again, an' never cum away!

When the Last Trumpet Sounds.

I wonder when the bugle blows its last endurin'
 blast,
 'N every man has answered—that is, every man
 that *dast*—
 'N the angel band is waitin' for the final word to
 march,
 Who'll be the men t' lead us through the portals
 of the Arch?

Will it be them that allus was conspicuous here
 below—
 The presudents 'n statesmeners 'n such as them
 y' know?
 P'r'aps it will, but, durn it, it won't seem a fair
 divide—
 It 'pears t' me that *their* reward come 'fore they
 up an' died.

I've pitcheded that 'ere spirit host an' allus there
 has been
 Away in front, a-leadin' 'em, a band o' joyous
 men—
 Them patient chaps that waited fer reward till
 they was dead—
 Who lived their lives an' done their best an' never
 got ahead.

Ould Barney M'Ginn.

A JOLLY ould man was Barney McGinn!
 His spharklin' blue eyes had the blarney in—
 A bit of a poipe hangin' over his chin—
 An' an ould white hat,
 An' a woide cravhat,
 An' there yez have loikes of ould Barney McGinn.

He sorreyed wid naybours whose hours was sad,
 An' sharin' the joys of thim thot was glad;
 He looked on the good and looked over the bad;
 An' the divil a wurrd
 Has a man iver hurrd
 Agin the ould man since he grew from a lad.

His greetin' was glad as the flowers of June,
 As cheerful in mornin' as night or at noon;
 "The top of the morn t' yersilf, gossoon—
 'Tis a splendid day,"
 Thin he'd go on his way,
 The tap of his cane always playin' a chune!

A storm sthruck the church an' burned it wan day—
 An' paypul moved out an' the priest wudn't sthay,
 An' naught in the parish but wint to decay,
 But the divil, I'm blist,
 Was a bit of it missed,
 Till pore ould Barney McGinn wint away!

The happy ould fellah wid poipe on his chin,
 His jolly blue eyes wid the sun shinin' in;
 The childer cry for him, an' wimin an' min,
 An' the place ain't the same
 Since the Black Hunter came
 An' tuk off the shmile of ould Barney McGinn.

The Old Fishing Hole.

You sing the song of the meadows who will,
 The songs of the sumach and daisies and clover,
 Songs of the pathway, the highroad and hill
 Where clouds of the summer drift lazily over—
 I'll sing a song of the old "fishin' hole"
 And a wishing string on the end of a pole.

Deep in the heart of the woodland it lies
 At the end of the pathway the boys have made
 to it,
 Still as the woods or the overhead skies
 And deep as the hearts of the youngsters who
 knew it.
 Ho, it's a throne for a towheaded king
 With a scepter of elder and bobber and string!

Place where we wandered in Youth's rosy dawn
 Unmindful of life and its sweet necromancies—
 Spot where in manhood we've stolen and gone
 And fished with indifference and dwelt with our
 fancies,
 Ever alert that our line should be taut
 To catch the "old sett'ler" that never was
 caught.



The Ol' Fishin' Hole

You sing the songs of the meadows who will,
The songs of the sumach, the daisies and clover,
I'll sing the song of the "fishin' hole" still
With old recollections all hovering over—
Throne in the woods where we loitered in state
And learned to be patient and hopeful—and wait.

The Tale the Stage Driver Told.

WHY, he was as straight as a limb, sir,
 Slim wus;
 His name? Well we called him "Slim," sir,
 Well—cuz
 He never had no name around hare,
 As frequently happens to men fair an' square—
 We never ast questions of such, do y' see?
The same 's apt to happen t' you or to me,
 Do y' savvy?

'Twas thus ran the tale of the driver, as, hugging
 the road by the canyon, he pointed to a grave on
 the hillside, the goal of some luckless wand'rer—

An' the gal who cum with him was fair, sir,
 At least
 As any, I reckon, back thare, sir,
 Back East
 Where you hail, I take it—with a face like a rose;
 She purty nigh worshipped that feller, I 'spose!
 Her eyes used to thank him like a fawn's allus will
 That's saved by a hunter from dogs or the kill—
 Understand?

And here the man flicked his wheel-horse, gently,
 as if quite unconscious, and softly deplored the
 passing of gallantry there in the Westland.

They lived in a cabin, up yon, sir,
 I expect
 Fer six months er more, cum an' gone, sir,
 I reck'lect
 The stranger I brung along this same trail—
 A Yankee, I tuk it, sort o' dudish an' pale;
 He ast whare *she* lived an' described her fair—
 I p'inted the place an' I left him right thare—
 Right yender!

And then the sharp eyes of the driver seemed
 to scan the grey path in the mountains that led
 to the two lovers' cabin, clinging there on the
 edge of the canyon.

But "Slim" saw him first—saw the stranger,
 I ersume,
 An' I reckon, too, scented sum danger
 I persume,
 For he goes t' the cabin an' he fills up his gun
 An' he kisses the gal like he allus had dun,
 Then goes to the rock t' the left o' yon riff,
 'N blows out his brains an' goes over the cliff—
A thousand feet!

Then he told of the meeting of sister and brother
 —the latter the stranger—who marveled much at
 a woman who would live thus alone in those moun-
 tains.

We perjured airselves, like sin, sir,
 Fer "Slim";
 Fer ever' dogged man that cum in, sir,
 Liked him;

We told him—her brother—she'd lived alone—*see?*
That nary a word cud be sed agin she!
He took her back East. We buried our pal
Who'd blowed out his brains t' perteck a poor gal,
 Out yender;
 Game man!

The driver pulled up his horses and lashed them into a fury, roundly cursing society for pressing its foolish indictments.

“Discharged.”

THEY'VE drawn the shades behind me where
 the free land rolls away,
 They've took my kit an' Betsy an' they've fig-
 gered up my pay.
 They've gived me just a bloomin' bit o' paper,
 stamped an' signed,
 An' when the troop goes out again—I've got t'
 stay behind!

No more o' sleeping 'neath the stars along with
 horse an' men—
 I'll never hear our trumpeter blow “reville”
 again!
 No more I'll stretch my achin' limbs an' drink
 the mornin's dew—
 O Lordy, how they'll miss me when the cavalry
 goes through!

I 'spose sum bloomin' rooky 's straddle Betsy!
 Like as not
 He don't know “boots an' saddles” from the
 “stable call” or “trot”—
 An' her the best-trained trooper's mare in this
 division, sir!
 It hain't so much for me I whines, as what it
 is for her!

I hain't been decorated fer no speshul gallant stunt,
 Except a saber cut behind and one or two in
 front,
 But it don't seem but yesterday that them G. O.'s
 was read,
 "We mention Trooper Jackson for his gal-
 lantry," they said.

It seems but just a week ago, along that ornery trail
 That me an' Betsy crawled at night apast old
 Spotted Tail
 An' brought the Seventh up at dawn in time t'
 save 'em all—
 An' now a rooky 's ridin' her an' I'm shoved
 in the stall!

It's marvelous how grateful Uncle Sam is (in his
 mind)—
 Now when the troop goes out again he lets me
 stay behind!
 But there's one grain o' comfort, an' I'm thankful
 for it, too—
*It's knowin' that they'll miss me when the cavalry
 goes through!*

A Cowpuncher and Prayer.

I AIN'T much a prayerful man,
 I'spose it's 'cause I'm all alone;
 I've heerd some prayers, tho', off an' on,—
 A padre down t' San Antone
 Wunst prayed fer me, but hell-a-mile,
 I didn't feel no different when
 He'd ended up, as I cud see,
 Than when the geezer fust began!

An' wunst I heerd a feller pray
 Who'd stole a hawss at Eagle Nest,
 But shucks, when we-all strung him up
 He hollered jist like all the rest;
 I've heerd a feller pray t' live—
 I've heerd another pray t' die;
 But, shoo, the fust one died that night,
 An' 'tother lived—*an' that's no lie!*

But 'tother night whilst ridin' in
 I stopped at Dollar Billy's place—
 Bill's got a parcel, now, o' kids—
 He's married now fer quite a space;
 An' thar I heerd a prayer that *was*,
 That changed my prayer idees a heap!
 Have y' heerd a dad-burned little tad
 Pray "Now I lay me down t' sleep"?

Jist Loafin'.

THEY hain't no sense, ez I kin see,
 Of workin' on etarnally
 'Ithout no stops t' think er dream,
 Er study Natcher's perfect scheme
 That's lyin' all around ye, jist
 Her happiest an' lov'liest!
 I swan, I like t' jist fergit,
 Occasional, the work in it,
 An' leave my hawsses standin' there
 In yender furrow—'bandon care,
 An' sort o' loaf a spell an' loll
 Agin some ol' snake-fence that's all
 Nigh busted down, an' listen to
 What Natcher's got t' say t' you
 In way o' cheer, an' think on it—
 Jist loaf a bit!

I like t' look beyant the woods
 To other farms an' nayborhoods,
 An' speckylate on what there is
 In all this hullsome world o' His;
 It cums t' you in consequence
 Of leanin' on a old snake-fence—
 They hain't no view o' Life so rare
 Ez what y' git whilse leanin' thare!
 Jist try it wunct an' take a rest—
 You'll find that it'll pay the best,
 Fer him who 'complishes the most
 Is him who stops an' ponders so' st
 He'll value, when he plows agin,
 The fertile soil he's workin' in—
 Jist try it wunct, an' think on it—
 Jist loaf a bit!

In Dreamland.

O WHERE do you go, little Curlylocks—
 Where is it you wander and what to see?
 O where do you ride when mother rocks,
 And what are the wonders denied to me?
 So tightly your eyes close, dreamily,
 When chirp the birds from the cuckoo clocks
 And softly and sweetly they summon thee—
 O, where do they call you, Curlylocks?

Across a bridging of silvery strands,
 And thence, by a path, to a laughing stream;
 And then, like a wish, into Fairylands
 I go my way on a golden beam;
 There's nothing for me but to play and dream,
 And join my song with the angel bands,
 And pluck the flowers that nod and seem
 To grow in the skies for a baby's hands.

And what do you see in the Dreamland nooks,
 What fairy pictures are there to see?

* * * * *

The little shepherds with dainty crooks
 Who leave their flocks to play with me;
 A prince in velvet who bends his knee;
 A gnome that lives by the laughing brooks;
 Away in our Dreamland fields I see
 The little friends of my picture books.



A Little Girl in Gingham

Seems t' me, by jist a-squintin', I kin see her jist
 ez plain
 Flittin' 'round among the flowers er a-swingin'
 down the lane—
 Purty cheeks with blush o' roses, heart ez free an'
 light ez air—
 An' a little bit o' feller tendin' to her smallest care—
 Bashful lover,
 Freckled lover
 Of a little girl in gingham with sum daisies in her
 hair.

'Crost the shadders wife is settin' with her knittin'
 in her lap,
 An' her hair in snow-white ringlets creeps frum
 underneath her cap—
 Age is tellin', time is spellin', yit I never, I declare,
 Seem t' git the knack o' seein' that it's mother
 settin' there—
 Seems t' me
 I on'y see
 Jist a little girl in gingham with sum daisies in her
 hair!

Far Apart.

TWO seekers for the Polar climes
 Both left from the Equator—
 One north, one south, they went, agreed
 To meet and recount later.

The first one found the North Pole, and
 The second found the other,
 And, as agreed, they met; one said:
 "What found you there, my brother?"

"Beside the North Pole," he replied,
 "A wanderer abided."
 "Your name?" I asked. "My friend, my name
 Is Theory," he confided.

"And what found you?" the second asked;
 "It's passing strange, but fact is,
 I found a like chap at the South,
 Who said his name is Practicel!"

“At Home.”

“**A**T Homes” are most pecoolyur, not t’ say
 they’re even quaint,
 Fer, though “at home” most ever’one attendin’
 of ’em *hain’t*,
 The which is appertainin’ an’, as I set out t’ do,
 Gives sumthin’ of a idee of the one *we* anty-ed to;
 The cyards wa’n’t delt permiscus-like, but only to
 the pick—
 T’ jist the soshul fav-er-ites up here on Skillin’s
 Crick.

The cyards they plainly specified “on Mondays,
 8 t’ 10,”
 The which wuz first misleadin’ to the hull of us,
 but then
 We sort o’ kind o’ figgered out, though down in
 black an’ white,
 That she’d miss-delt an’ didn’t want us *every*
 Monday night!
 To which conclusion we agreed, resolved t’ see
 it thue,
 An’ so we togged in joy clothes an’ Sunday slickers,
 too.

A greaser met us at the door a-hissin': "Parlezvoo";
 We answered, pert an' proper-like; "An' thanky,
 same t' you";
 An' showed our cyards (which we opined we'd
 really orter take
 T' show the man a-tendin' door they wuzn't no
 mistake);
 He sized 'em up an' let us pass with nary slip er
 hitch,
 An' showed us whare t' shed our coats an' check
 our guns an' sich.

The real elite had gethered thare sum little time
 before—
 I won't fergit the looks o' things when I cum in
 the door!
 The gals! I cayn't describe 'em an' do justice, ner
 I won't,
 With twict ez much of clothes behind ez what they
 had in front!
 An' ez fer men, why sum of 'em appeared in
 "huntin' case,"
 But most of 'em wuz togged in what the boys called
 "open-face."

They talked of Elbert Hubbard and of Wilde an'
 even wuss,
 An' lots o' poet fellers that are antedatin' us;
 An' then a vis'ter poured sum tea—sum mixed
 Oolong an' Jap—
 In little cups like thimbles that y' balanced in yer
 lap.
 An' jist a-summarizin', as it's given me t' see,
 They dealt too much of poets an' a little too much
 tea!

But this is incidentul—why, they wuzn't enny fun
Till jist about the quittin' time an' then the fun
begun,

When Dollar Bill an' Ornery Ike an' Big Topeka
Red

Got playin' three-card monte on the aidge o' some
one's bed;

They'd delt around an' Dollar Bill wuz jist t' deal
again

An' banked t' git his losin's, when the tarnal clock
struck ten!

Well, say, 'twas most amazin', not t' say eternal
queer!

We told him that the deal was closed, but Dollar
wudn't hear;

The way he shot that bedroom up wuz sure a
shame t' own—

The pillers looked like peekaboos y' see at San
Antone!

I hain't no moralizer, but frum this y' sure kin see
What cums o' talkin' poetry an' drinkin' too much
tea!

We know when we have got enough, an' we're
content t' stick

An' court our greasy deck o' cyards right here on
Skillin's Crick!

They hain't no way t' gentle men as rough an'
gruff ez we

An' hold 'em down t' poetry an' Jap an' Oolong
tea!

Hereafter all our cyards 'll read, if you'll jist take
a peek:

“At Home on Mondays, 8 t' 10—*an' all the rest
the week!*”

The Measure of a Man.

IT'S no place to measure the soul of a man
 Out here in the markets of Malice and Greed,
 Where men live the slogan "Survive if you can"
 And hear not the cries of the weaker—or heed;
 It's no place to measure the soul of a man
 Where Strife lives to stifle each kindlier deed.

It's no time to measure the heart of a man
 When drums beat to arms and he answers the call,
 And goes forth to battle to slay if he can,
 And gloat o'er the sorrows of others, who fall;
 It's no time to measure the heart of a man
 With duty and valor o'ershadowing all.

It's no time to measure the faith of a man
 When darkness abounds and the terrors prevail—
 We mortals are happy to believe if we can,
 But Doubt is a giant and humans are frail;
 It's no time to measure the faith of a man
 When doubt rages high and the strongest will
 quail.

Be just to your brother and measure him well,
 Not out in the markets of Greed and of Woe,
 But there in the home, in the twilighted spell,
 With children and wife, 'neath the lamp's mellow
 glow,
 Where all of his virtues and qualities tell—
 Where, if he's a man, all his manhood will show.

“Mutterin’ Joe.”

“**M**UTTERIN’ Joe” is shot—an’ dead!
 Cudn’t believe ’em when they sed
 It was so! Still Joe’s been gone
 Forty years now, off an’ on,
 T’ all intents an’ purposes,
 ’Cept sum lucid spells o’ his.

When the “Bucktails” marched away—
 Sixty-one—ol’ res’dunts say
 Wa’n’t a man on Broken Straw—
 Ennywhere—they ever saw,
 Shot ez straight an’ true ez Joe—
 Sure ez Judgment Day, y’ know!

’Fore he left the townfokes run
 Bullets fer him; give him one
 Fer each loyal State that staid
 In the Union, an’ they say-ed,
 Ez they reckoned up the ’mount;
 “Joe make every bullet count.”

Then he went an’, lawsy, son,
 You know what them “Bucktails” dun!—
 Fredericksburg an’ Richmond-way,
 Back t’ Spotts-yl-van-i-a—
 Fer the war! An’ how they fit!—
Gess they hold the ry-cord yit!

Finally Appamattox cum—
 Brung the "Bucktail" boys back hum,
 'Cludin' Joe—er Joe that was—
 Not the same young man because
 He was changed; his comrades sed
 War had sort o' "teched" his head.

Greeted 'em an' speechyfied,
 Townfokes did; Joe drew aside—
 Didn't seem t' know er keer—
 Wasn't even bein' here!
 Just wud mutter 'ternally:
 "Yes, I made 'em count," sez he.

"Made 'em count," Fer forty years
 That's been ringin' in his ears;
 Sumtimes when there'd be a day
 That his head was clear, he'd say:
 "One fer every ball I had—
An' the last was jist a lad!"

Townfokes allus humored Joe—
 Harmless sort o' man, y' know;
 Never begged er stole, but dun
 Odd jobs fer most ever' one;
 "Friend t' all" he allus sed—
 Only war had "teched" his head.

Wa'n't upsettin' when I saw
 Found him dead on Broken Straw,
 Cold an' dead agin a tree—
 Joe had planned it carefully;
 Seemed he never cud fergit!
Gess the war hain't over yit!

A Soldier's Appreciation.

(The Philippine Service.)

I'VE had a swell dame on the Bowery; I've
 fondled a gal in St. Paul;
 I've had 'em, Caucasian an' yeller, an' told the
 same story to all;
 I've broke with a gal back in Denver; I left a
 case pendin' in Nome;
 I had one—but that doesn't matter—she's married
 an' settled at home;
 I've had 'em of various morals, in various parts
 of the earth,
 But I had t' cum out t' the Islands t' find what a
 woman is worth!
 A-lyin' here like a heathen,
 A fever-chart over my bed
 T' git me my pay while I'm breathin'
 An' check me up when I'm dead;—
 (Say, nurse can't y' give me sum water?
 Aw, please, jist a little bit more!)
 —Y'll learn lots o' wimin—or oughter—
 Y' never have reckined before!

She sits by my cot in the evenin', fer then's when
 the fever is high,
 An' sort o' smooths out the ruffles in the path we
 all travel who die;
 She tells me the tales o' th' Homeland, an' settles
 old scores with my soul,
 An' squares me up with my conscience, against
 the Sergeant's Last Roll;

An' t' think of all of the females I've coppered
 all over the earth
 That I had t' cum out t' the Islands t' find what a
 woman is worth!
 (What does he say—the perfesser?
 Now don't be afeered, mam, t' tell!)
 She lies like a lady, God bless her!
 She *knows* that I'll never git well!
 An' the rest of 'em always was lyin'—
 They strung me all over the earth—
 An' here at last when I'm dyin'
 I find what a woman is worth!

Defying Age.

THAT'S the story I am tol':
 "Gittin' ol'! Gittin' ol'!"
 Well, mebbe so, but seems t' me
 I'm spry as what I uster be!
 Git yer fiddle—draw yer bow—
 Rosum up an' let 'er go—
 Louder! Faster! Let 'er sing!
 Watch this ol' time pigeon wing!
 What's the matter—air y' dun?
 Cracky, I have jist begun!
Whare's that weazened up ol' soul
Telt me I wuz gittin' ol'?

Little Lost Child.

MITE, on the curb of the city street,
 With quivering voice and helpless feet,
 No one to soothe you, caress or bind,
 Or kiss your curls, but the vagrant wind!
 No one to strengthen your faltering hand
 And lead you back into Happier Land;
 Poor little mite with your heart so wrung—
 Your sadness and sorrows begun so young!—
 Little lost child!

“Mike, the crossing cop,” sheds a tear
 And hurrying people pause to hear—
 Pause to pity you, lost—alone—
 Then hurry on to their home and own;
 Even a teamster slacks his pace
 And wipes a tear from his honest face;
 Coddled by women so kind and good
 Who lavish the pity of motherhood—
 Little lost child!

Poor little thing, with your curls wind-tos't,
 You make me pine for a child I lost—
 Make me long for a baby face
 That shines Up There in the angel's place!
 Cease your tears and your fears so wild,
 For all the world loves a little child—
 Touched are the hearts of all who see
 And all the world is a parent to thee,
 Little lost child!

Understanding.

I met a man today who understood
 And loved the little things I love so well,
 Who, charmed by songs of birds in field and wood,
 Could tune his ear to what they had to tell;
 Who chose the paths that led through vale and
 dell—

Let others stroll the crowded streets who would—
 And walked where lilies struck their tiny bell
 In greeting, and—I knew he understood.

We walked along a quiet country road,
 And flanked by scenes we both left long ago—
 Past many a little, humble, quaint abode
 Where dwelt the simple folks we used to know;
 He greeted honest faces, all aglow,
 With loving words and kindnesses that showed
 He'd not shut out those friends he used to know
 Who staid behind—along the Quiet Road.

He knew the paths that led by stream and wood,
 And loved the little things I love so well,
 And cherished all, so homely yet so good,
 And knew the homely tales they had to tell;
 He felt the silent forest's mystic spell—
 The quiet charm—quite as no other could,
 And loved it much, and then I knew full well
 At last I'd met a man who understood.

Where's He At?

WHERE'S the feller we used t' know?
 First name was Sam, er mebbe 'twas
 Joe,
 Mebbe 'twas Bill—an' the 'tother was Joy—
 Never got cure't of bein' a boy!
 Yew reckolect him like he was then?
 Allus was smilin' an' bald ez a wen—
 Had a big fambly—five, more er less't,
 Last one, allus, he cottoned th' best—
 —Where's he at?

Allus used t' cum hum at night
 Hist off his coat an' light up the light,
 Flop over int' his big webbin' chair,
 Never would stop fer combin' his hair,
 Ease off his gallus—an' remember, by jocks,
 Kicked off his shoes an' tromped in his sox,
 Romped with them kids till he mos' cudn't
 see—
 They liked it purty nigh much ez he?—
 —Where's he gone?

Then when he sot t' the evenin' repast
 Nothin' was finer than hearin' him ast
 Blessin' fer all, with a smile that was meant:
 "Lord, we are thankful fer what y' have
 sent—
 All of our enemies we freely fergive—
 We're thankful t' yew fer lettin' us live—"
 Where's he at? Well, wherever he be,
 Here's th' respects of one humble ez me—
 —Good luck t' him!

The Man Who Lost.

It's easy enough when a man has gained
The great success that the gods endow,
To take his hand and, as fate ordained
To place the laurel upon his brow;
But what of the man who has paid the cost?—
The wand'ring one of the Host That Lost?

For each who wins there is one who fails—
For every smile there's a teardrop shed;
The scroll of fame, in the final scales,
Will underweigh all the woes it bred;
There is no path to the goal but's crossed
By scores of those of the Host That Lost.

His hands are palsied, his wounds are sore!
When, deep in his heart, sweet memories stir,
What blame to him if he lingers o'er
The cup that hides all the days that were—
The brimming cup that will shut from view
The happier days that the Failure knew?

Though bleared his eye, in its light there is
A longing, deep, for a child's caress—
An humble wish for a child of his
To lavish his treasured tenderness—
A mute appeal for a word—a sigh—
From one of them all who pass him by!



The Man Who Lost

The laurel wreath is a fair reward
For him who won and who fought so well,
Then why not save, from your liberal hoard,
A word of cheer for the man who fell?—
A thought for the man who has paid the cost—
A hand for those of the Host That Lost?

When Pals Must Part.

WHEN two strong men, who've passed the
 bowl and laughed at quip and jest—
 Who've smoked their pipes, believed in life and
 looked upon its best—
 Who've e'er been true when Failure claimed the
 toll it takes from men—
 Who've given each the other's hand and helped
 him up again—
 The world must turn aside nor heed the honest
 tears that start,
 When two such men shall reach the forks where
 best of pals must part!

"Old pal"—there lurks within the words a mean-
 ing more than friend—
 A pledge, a trust, a fellowship that only men can
 blend;
 They've shared their woes, their cheer and smiles,
 alike the worst and best,
 And pledged the world for what it's worth and
 overlooked the rest;
 They've drunk in silence 'round the board, and
 seen, with heavy heart,
 The time when they shall reach the forks where
 best of pals must part.

They've passed the bowl and ever made of Fate
 a happy jest,
 But, comes a time when cheer departs and Death
 becomes the guest—
 Then two strong men shall clasp their hands and,
 ere the final ban,
 Can look into each other's eyes and each can see
 —a Man!
 It is no woman's heart that quails, nor childish
 tears that start,
 When two such men stand at the forks where
 best of pals must part!

The Happy Man.

I do not toil that I may hoard
 The tithe my labor brings to me—
 The sweetest draught comes from a gourd,
 And happiness from poverty;
 I toil because I've hands to do,
 And love of men within my heart,
 And, when my sands have all run through,
 I want it said I did my part.

The scanty tithe that men can give
 Is but a puny prize at best—
 It is enough that I should live
 In happiness and peace and rest;
 I give my toil in humble pride,
 To merit, when its end shall come,
 The love that waits at eventide
 Within the open door of Home.

Shadders.

PUD Sennett, where be you t'day
 That you can't hear a feller, say,
 'Thout him shoutin' 'nuff t' wake
 The tarnal universe? Less take—
 I stump y', Pud—take off these things,
 Air watch an' chains an' these 'ere rings,
 They're nuthin' needful, if y' please—
 They're jist a Growed-up's vanities!
 Less peel air store-made coat an' vest,
 Air patent shoes an' all the rest,
 'N wear a cap an' roundabout
 'N a woolun scarf fer keepin' out
 The chisley air, an' I suppose
 We'd orter have sum "copper toes";
 Less put hoss-ches'nuts 'round air neck
 T' stave the measles off, I 'speck,
 'N wipe air nose, fer all we keer,
 Acrost air sleeve, there's no one here
 That knows er cares fer us, I vum,
 We're boys agin—us two—back hum!
 'N now cum on, fer I'm doggoned,
 There's skatin' down on Green's old pond!

Of course we can't! I wish we cud!
 My words is fig-ger-a-tive, Pud,
 A sort of dream, an' every day
 The past gits more an' more that way!

Occasional I seem t' see
 The boys we knowed, an' you an' me,
 A-startin' top o' Millses Hill
 T' slide clean down t' Scouller's Mill,
 Then double back t' Green's old pond
 Where, over night, sum magic wand
 Had waved, it seemed, with gen'rous poise
 With jist a mind t' please us boys!
 The girls an' boys of boys we knew
 Air skating like we used to do;
 I wonder if they ever feel
 The shadders 'round them gently steal,
 Er take 'em by the hand and spin
 Across the pond an' back agin?
 I wonder do they know er care
 That 'mongst them shadders flittin' there
 Are shadders, Pud, of you an' me—
 Er of us as we used to be?

Old Rosemont.

(Rosemont, Near Winchester, Virginia.)

THERE'S something in the magic of the gentle
 evening haze
 That seems to conjure visions of your past for-
 gotten days—
 A time 'twixt day and darkness when the shades
 dispel the glow,
 A subtle something whispers of the days so long
 ago.

I hear the hunter's tocsin sound, and, ere its call
 has died,
 Comes Chivalry upon a steed with Beauty by his
 side;
 A smile to greet, a hunting song and then away—
 away—
 Across the blue grass meadows where the quarry's
 courses lay.

I see the packs return again, the huntsmen, at their
 ease,
 Tell tales of those old hunting days beneath your
 spreading trees;
 I see your open portals shed a golden path, and
 then
 Your friends of olden, olden times pass through
 your doors again.

Your festal boards are spread once more and
 Beauty banters Wit,
 And favored is the ruby wine by ruby lips to it;
 The sighing evening zephyrs that across the blue
 grass steal,
 Bring music of the dance again—the old Virginia
 reel.

The picture sadly vanishes beyond the evening
 haze—
 Your silence but a mockery of those forgotten
 days!
 Your portals wide have closed upon your last
 departing guest,
 And Death has met him at your gate and led him
 toward the West.

Your thatch is hoary now, as mine, your comfort,
 as my own,
 Is looking back and living in the joys you have
 known,
 And cherishing old memories—a smile—a face—
 a name—
 The winters of our lives, old manse, are very much
 the same!

Winter Mornin's.

THERE'S mornin's when my roomatiz is worse
 than ordinary,
 An' wakes me up 'bout four o'clock, er mebbe
 nigher three.
 An' here I lay an' think an' dream, all soul alone,
 with nary
 A thing except my roomatiz t' keep me
 company;
 It somehow seems t' soothe the pain, jest lookin'
 out the wender,
 The lights from Mem'ry's candles come a-
 gleamin' 'cross the snow
 An' luminate a pitcher that I see again, off yender,
 Them good old winter mornin's in the Long
 Time Ago.

Them frosty winter mornin's, how I reckolect
 an' love 'em,
 As peaceful as the mornin's was before a
 woe was born;
 As crispy as the ling'rin'stars a-twinklin' above 'em,
 An' every sound was carried like 'twas blasted
 from a horn!
 I see 'em in the kitchen there, my mother, father,
 brother,
 The hired hand a-dozin' in a straight-back
 kitchen chair,
 An' 'Lizebuth, the orphant girl, our fambly used
 t' mother,
 A-turnin' golden buckwheats on the smokin'
 griddle there.

Across the mantled medder lot the nayburs' lights
 come shinin',
 A twinkle here, another there, a-gleamin' 'cross
 the way,
 They seem t' call in gentle voice, that's way beyant
 definin',
 "Good mornin', naybur, God has spared us
 fer another day."
 An' lyin' here, jest musin'-like, an' watchin'
 Mem'ry's prism,
 An' seein' lights of other days cum shinin'
 'cross the snow,
 I swanny, seems t' have the knack o' killin'
 roomatism,
 Jest thinkin' on them winter mornin's Long
 Time Ago!

Fall.

BRUSHWOOD burnin'—
 Leaves a-turnin'
 Yaller, gold and red;
 Wind's a-singin'—
 Birds a-wingin'
 South'ards, overhead.

Geese a-honkin'—
 Cattle chawkin'
 'Round th' pastur gate;
 Trees stopt gummin'—
 Fall 's a-cummin'
 Jist 's sure 's fate.

Corncrib 's heapin'—
 Grainbin 's keepin'
 Fuller than two ticks;
 Turkeys bluffin'—
 Right fer stuffin'
 'Bout th' Twenty-six.

Crops all tended—
 Work all ended—
 We're right snug at hum;
 Fall 's a-cummin'
 Jist a-hummin'—
 Durn it, let 'er cum.



Fall

The Last Edition.

WHEN the last of Life's Copy is finished
 And edited, baring the sin;
 When the stress of the toil is diminished,
 And final forms wait to go in;
 When the types are locked fast in their places—
 Our lives written there, and their sum—
 And we're gathered 'round here in our places
 All waiting for "30" to come;
 When the Master Hand touches the lever
 To run the edition That Day—
 Then, my brothers of Ever and Ever,
 Then what will our printed page say?

Will the Chief edit each little error?
 Each minor mistake will He see?
 Will He visit the punishing terror
 On mortals as helpless as we?
 Will He see the turned-rule in the column
 Each marking a task left undone?
 Will He note with a mien, grave and solemn,
 Good works that were never begun?
 When the Master Hand touches the lever
 To run the edition That Day,
 Then my brother of Ever and Ever
 Look well to what your pages say!

Dan M'Carty of the Crossing Squad.

A man of emotions and various notions is Officer
 Danny McCarty,
 He's always bossing the jam at the crossing—
 with some an unpopular party;
 He's a heart that is swelling beyond a man's
 telling, but in spite of all of his bossing,
 He's a saint, he's a lamb, when he holds up the jam
 for a Little Babe at the Crossing.

“Hold up yer car!
 Sthop where y' are—
 You wid the dumpin' cyart, *see ?!!*
 Er I'll bump y' with this!
 Come on, little miss,
 Over the crossin' wid me.”

He's hale and he's hearty, is Danny McCarty
 a tower 'midst greatest confusion,
 He's like to be laughing and joking and chaffing,
 and often he swears in profusion!
 'Till there comes a child with eyes blue and mild,
 with ringlets of gold all a-tossing,
 And traffic must pause for a minute, because,
 there's a Little Child at the Crossing.

“Sthop! That's enough!
 Nun o' yer guff,
 Er I'll run yez in, d' y' see ?!!
 You—go—to— Well,
 Come on, little gel,
 Over the crossin' wid me.”

His hand clasp is tender, his life is a fender,
 keeping all harm from the baby—

(Why, Danny, you're blinking; something, I'm
 thinking, has blown in your eye, sir,
 maybe!)

She crosses the street and kisses him sweet
 and leaves him there, standing alone—

(Those are tears in your eyes! Ah, Dan, I surmise,
 you've babies at home of your own!)

Then here's to you, Dan,
 You've no medals, man,
 Nor do they bedeck you in flowers—
 But, if danger e'er lures,
 May the Lord care for yours
 As safely as you've cared for ours!

Gone.

THE house is strangely silent now,
And not the same to me—
It lacks the joy and sunshine that
Its chief charm used to be;
It's like unto a golden crown
That's lost its richest jewel—
The brightest part of home is gone
Since baby went to school.

Her playthings? Yes, we keep them here
In orderly array,
But they but seem to emphasize
The truth that she's away!
They used to be all strewn about
Without regard to rule,
But O, they are so orderly
Since baby went to school!

Beneath the tree the garden swing
Sways sadly in the wind,
And all the place fair seems to weep
With us she left behind;
There is no glint of golden locks,
Like flashes from a jewel,
But all about it's lonely now.
Since baby went to school.

She didn't know how hard it was
To break those ties that bind
The day we started her to school
And bade the world be kind!
She couldn't feel the sorrow pangs
As she passed out our door!
It seemed the babe—we loved her so!—
Was gone for evermore!

Romancin'.

THERE'S sumtimes when the gloamin' sort o'
gets the best o' me—

A time when silent shadders makes the choicest
kumpany—

When ol' time fokes an' faces seem t' steal from
out the gloom

An' wait here at my elbow whilse I shift Life's
creakin' loom;

It's then I git t' musin' an' I rosum up my
bow

An' take down my ol' fiddle an' caress her soft
an' low—

She seems to git the speerit, an' I coax her
'twell she jest

Swells out her th'roat an' sings 'em—sings the
songs I love the best.

I foller her in rapshure whilse she leads me on
an' thue,

Beside the "Swanee River" an' "In Ole Vir-
ginny," too;

I peer thue storms o' teardrops ez her voice
drops soft an' low

An' fairly seems t' whisper to me "Ol' Black
Joe";

There's one more sympathetiker than what the
others air,

An' when she starts t' sing it I kin see them
shadders there

Draw closter 'round the fiddle fer to' hear
it—"Nellie Gray"—

They hain't no other music ever teched me
that-a-way!

I love 'er—how I love 'er!—every soul en-
durin' note—
I love her from her tailpiece to the latch around
her th'oat!
They hain't no other music short o' what the
angels sings
That's nowhere nigh ez purty ez th' music of
her strings—
I swanny, 't isn't music—really music—that she
plays,
It's actool conversation with the past and other
days!
If I cud have my ruthers when I die I 'low
I'd jest
Perfer t' hear my fiddle play the songs I love
the best!

The Place and Time for Prayer.

THEY met down there at Lonesome on the
 Spittin' Adder Crick—
 They was Ike an' Humpy Larkin an'—in fack
 the ch'ice an' pick
 Of all the men an' wimin in the Basin that p'tend
 They're ennywise religus. I cut in about the end

As our old Parson Highbee give the floor t' Izzy
 Sayre
 Ter talk about the ethics an' the time an' place
 fer prayer;
 Iz 'lowed he was pertickler 'bout the way he
 chose t' pray—
 Perfurred ter kneel beside a bed most enny time
 o' day.

The Parson an' Bill Thompkins an' Catamount
 Tom Lesch
 Allowed they'd dun their prayin'est prayer out
 in th' bresh
 With no one there to listen, an' ol' Stinkin'
 River Rice
 Maintained, fer bang-up prayin', why the cow
 range was his ch'ice.

An' then I reckoleckted of a time out in the hill
 Whilse chasin' of a rustler known as Silver Dollar
 Bill;
 I'm purty tarnal handy with a gun, but I'll
 be cuss't
 The rustler saw me cumin', an' he drawed his
 cannon fust!

I riz rite up in meetin' an', sez I, rite then an'
 there,
 "Now I hain't hell fer prayin' *enny* time er *enny*
 where,
 But I *have* prayed sum off 'an' on an' the best I
 ever dun
 Was wunct I 'us lookin' crosseyed into Silver
 Dollar's gun."

Outweighing All.

MOST every man, on reaching fame
 And fortune, be it good or bad,
 Doth meditate at times upon
 The helps and hardships he has had;
 The fellowship of men is much
 As shaping ends, but, back of it
 His life and all depends upon
 A mother's love—or lack of it.

The Paths to There are rough at best,
 And tortuous, we're apt to find,
 And yet, in spite of what men say,
 The world and all is good and kind;
 There's less of sorrow and of tears
 Than pleasure in this life-long quest,
 And cheering words are plentiful,
 But mother love outweighs the rest.

Old-Fashioned Flowers.

I fer one, hain't over-het
 'Bout new-fangled things, jist set
 That down in yer book! I jinks,
 Ever' half-baked man that thinks
 Things is better, as a rule,
 Than they used t' be 's a fool—
 (Course, friend, I'm exceptin' you)—
 Tell him that I sed so, too.

More improvement, seems t' me,
 In things as they used t' be;
 Flowers in par-tick-i-ler
 Growed a heap site purtier
 Then as now, is my surmise;
 Land o' livin', close my eyes—
 See them flowers maw set out—
 Je-e-emuny, I wanna shout!

Climbin' roses!—lawsey day—
 Runnin' this and thataway,
 Reechin' out an' smilin', too,
 Twistin' 'round the heart of you,
 Breathin' tender words o' love
 Underfoot and up above—
 Sweetest things I ever saw—
 Allus 'minded me of maw!

Slips from maw's ger-a-nium
 Growed us out o' house an' hum;
 Wa'n't a bare spot, I declare,
 But maw planted flowers thare!
 Hollyhawks an' pinys, too,
 Smilin' through the years at you—
 Wunder, do y', that one sings
 'Bout the good ol'-fashioned things?

Whare's yer new-style orchids at?—
 Cyclmuns an' sich as that,
 'Side o' these? Why I kin see
 More real beauty, seems t' me,
 In a rose er clover-tops
 Than in them 'ats growed in shops.
 You take them—I'll take the rest!
 Old-time posies I love best!

The Folly of Superstition.

AS it's give me to percieve
 Fokes that hold, er tend t' b'lieve,
 That hawss-chessnuts he'p, er is,
 Cuore fer, the rheumatiz,
 Er that things more foolisher
 'N chessnuts, wuz invented fer
 Cuorin' an' p'ventin' death,
 Better hold their doggone breath;
 Them fokes allus seemed t' me
 'Bout the foolishest they be!

Take fer instunce Mylo Bee,
 Dumbdest fool I evur see;
 Wa'n't a pocket in his vest,
 Coat er pants that wuzn't jest
 Crammed with vegetables an' sich
 Keepin' ever'thing frum itch
 Clean 't black dipthery frum
 Mylo, an' I gess they's sum
 Doctors nevir heerd of, sir,
 Mylo had pervided fer!

Wore sum fetty 'round his neck
 Fer the janders, I expeck;
 Toted taters all about
 Fer t' keep numony out;
 Buckeyes fer the rheumatiz
 Wuz a fool idee o' his!

* * *

Nevur dun a bit o' good—
 Knowed they wa'n't no liklihood—
 Mylo got—perhaps you've seen—
Blowed up by a thrashin' 'chine!

Ben Tarr Opines.

THERE'S nuthin' I know, er that ever I see,
 That's half 's contrary ez human fokes bel
 They're sartin an' sure t' put plans out o' j'int—
 An' right here in Swazy 's a sample in p'int.

Why, ever since I cum t' Swazy, I gess,
 Sam Davis 's been purrin' t' Myra Ann Kress—
 Jist lookin' at others neither one cud abide,
 An' ever'one said it was all cut an' dried.

An' Myry wus pert-like an' purty an' bright,
 Whilse all 'at Sam knowed wudn't last over
 night;
 Yit Sam went t' Congerss, contrary t' plan,
An' Myry run off with a lightenin' rod man!



Ol Ben Tarr

The Old Back Stoop.

WELL, yes, the house is finished an' it's
bigger 'n creation!

There's nuthin' in the township that is *half ez*
big er fine;

The wimin folks kep' naggin' fer t' build it, till,
darnation,

I jist plumb *bad* t' build it t' presarve my
peace o' min'.

We moved the old place backurds, tew the orchard
over yender;

It's purty, hain't it, stranger? How them
mornin' glories droop,

An' see that mountain ivy how it clings s' soft an'
tender

Around the ellow timbers of the old back
stoop.

Air new house is more competint an' cost a heap,
by tow hitt—

A sta-shun-ary wash troff an' them fixin's
ever'where—

But sumhow, jist betwixt us (*but I wudn't have*
them know it!)

I feel jist twict as happy in the old house over
there!

We built it when we married an' we cleared the
oak an' beegum—

Around it all air babies uster romp an' play
an' troop;

They're mostly sleepin' yender an' the only time
I see 'em

Is whilse I set an' romance on the old back
stoop!

It seems—I 'low I'm foolish—but it seems t' me
the flowers

Grow sweeter 'round the old place than the
new place over there;

It seems the vines clings closer, and I believe the
evenin' showers

Fall softer on that mossy roof than mostly
ennywhere!

It seems the birds sings sweeter an' that Natchur
is more tender

An', O them old man's fancies that, so soft
an' silent troop,

Acrost an' old man's eyesight an' jist fade away
off yender,

*Look sweetest frum the settle on the old back
stoop!*

The Nursery Battle.

THERE'S a battle that's waged without
 glory,
 Away from cantonments of men;
 No heroes to figure in story
 Or claim the historian's pen;
 The battlefield? Here by the fire.
 The time? When the shadows creep out,
 Then I hear the soldiers conspire
 And hear their chief officer shout:
 "Forward, kids, guide right—
 Let's have a tickle fight!"

They come pajama-ed and nighty-ed,
 I hear their soft tread in the hall—
 (But, of course, they mustn't be sighted
 At risk of spoiling it all!)
 Their chieftain, he is the oldest,
 His aide is the next little lad
 And the army—God bless it!—is boldest,
 The baby, the pet of its dad!
 Still on, "Guide right—
 Now to have a tickle fight!"

The onslaught is more than I bargain!
 No martyr more freely has bled!
 But I'm caught by the narrowest margin—
 The army sits down on my head!
 And they torture their captive outrageous
 When once they subject him like this,
 Till the clock calls the soldiers courageous
 And the army's dismissed with a kiss.
 "Night, dad, good-night—
 We won the tickle fight!"

To your rest and God keep every laddie,
 Each brave, curly head of the line;
 Ho, you think that you won from your daddy
 But the spoils of the battle are mine!
 And the fruits I shall cherish forever,
 And down through the haze and the years,
 I shall see your bright faces whenever
 Your battle-cry sounds in my ears:
*"Forward, kids, guide right—
 Let's have a tickle fight!"*

The Lonely Man.

DON'T want t' be no prince ner king,
 Ner armurd knight ner anything
 'Ats got a title hitched tew it—
 Don't hanker after that a bit!
 Don't want no flunkies standin' 'roun'
 'T bow an' scrape an' mop the groun'
 'N call me "king" er sumpin wuss;
 I 'low I wudn't give a cuss
 T' be a "jedge" er even "squire,"
 Er "Congersmun," er mebbe higher,
 But—(durn thet sweat-bug in my eye!)—
 There's times I jist swell up an' cry
 T' have sum dad-burned little tad
 Look up at me 'n' call me "Dad!"

Folks Back Home.

IT'S mighty good a-gittin' back to see
 The fokes an' things familyur-like to me,
 Espeshully since I've been gone away
 Fer quite a spell o' years; I want t' say
 There's nuthin' does me nowhere nigh sich good
 Ez gittin' back in air ol' naybur-hood
 Where I wuz born, brung up an' orter staid;
 "It makes a feller young," I allus say-ed.

I like to loaf around the ol' hotel
 'N gas Grip Martin, mebbe—hear him tell
 Them ol'-time stories like he allus does
 An' how things looked afore the fire was
 In '84; an' how, afore it got
 Cooled off a bit Nobe Terrell went an' bought
 Sum hemlock boards an' built a new store where
 The Soldiers Monymnt stands now—rite there!

I like t' sort o' stretch my hide an' hoof
 In Billy Ross's store an' talk of Rufe
 An' Billy Braden, too; they played—less see—
 The tuba horn an' drum, respectively,
 In air old band—O years an' years ago!—
 But sumtimes when I listen, soft an' low
 I seem t' hear their music, an' I get
 The idee in my head they're playin' yet!

I like t' meet 'em all, but seems t' me
 There's sum o' them whose blunt veracity
 I can't endorse—I mean the ones who say:
 "I swan, my boy—I swanny!—but you're gray!"
 But others of 'em—them I like t' hear—
 Say, "Sakes alive, you're younger every year!"
 The tarnal liars! But sumhow, when I jest
 Get thinkin' on't, *I like them liars best!*

Come Back Again.

COME, grand-dad, please come back agin, and
all you old-home fokes,

You Wigginses an' Bannisters, an' Mary Ellen,
too,

Less set around the livin' room an' have charades
an' jokes

And gas about the nayburhood jest like we used
t' do;

I want t' hear again about the bear Hi Burden shot,
Whare Himeses house is standin' now, an' when
y' finish, jest

Switch off an' tell 'bout Herkimer whare you lived
'fore y' got

The idee in your head that you wud like t'
come out West.

An' tell us 'bout your journey here, an' when the
army was

An' how you marched t' Richmond with the
16th Illinoy,

How grandma hauled the cordwood after you
enlisted, 'cause

They's no one here t' do it durin' the army—
man er boy;

Y' mind that Hampshire feller that y' used t' tell
about

They captured after Gettysburg along with
'Bige an' you,

An' he dug out o' Libby an' went back an' he'ped
you out,

An' all o' you was safe and sound? Well, tell
that story, too!

An' tell us 'bout the doin's here when you come
 marchin' home,
 An' all that you remember of the speech
 Jedge Acker made
 'Bout copperheads an' stay-at-homes, an' then
 recite that pome
 That Lidy wrote when you come back; "The
 Soldiers' Last Parade";
 Come, tell us all you used t' tell, when we was
 gethered here,
 'Bout fokes an' things that used t' be in that old
 airly day—
 I'll call 'em back, the Wigginses an' all them
 nayburs dear—
 They're only jest beyant a spell—beyant the
 evenin's grey.

An' when the talk an' embers drap t' jest a glow,
 er less,
 We'll gether 'round the organ here, jist like we
 used t' do,
 An' sing the songs that mother loved, that spoke
 her tenderness,
 "The Gipsy Boy," "Kentucky Home," an' "I
 Shall Wait Fer You,"
 An' all them songs! O please come back, it's
 only jest a step,
 An' take my hand an' speak t' me an' clear my
 dimmin' sight,
 An' let these golden mem'ries that I've cherished
 an' I've kep'
 Fer all these years, be real again, an' mine—fer
 jest t' night!

Christmas Eve in the Old Manse.

THE flame burns low in the friendly grate
 And, as in dreams, from the magic haze
 They step with a carriage gallant, sedate,
 The maids and men of the olden days;
 The manse is silent and drear within—
 The embers drop to a throbbing glow—
 'Tis midnight strikes, and then begin
 The Christmas revels of Long Ago.

Fair maids look down from the ancient walls,
 Milady steps from her golden frame
 To join her lord in the musty halls
 In minuet or a madcap game;
 Bright eyes repeat what the roses said
 And upturn under the mistletoe
 Till lips meet lips that are cold and dead
 And turned to dust since the Long Ago.

From out the nooks of the years they come,
 The soldiers, brave, in their trappings gay—
 Come back from the trumpet and throbbing drum
 To eyes that wept when they marched away;
 Their dreams of valor have fled tonight,
 And now when the shadows softly steal,
 Each clasps the one of his heart's delight
 To dance his love in the Christmas reel.

And then to the board, to the festal place,
 A feast of beauty and wine and wit,
 Where quip meets quip and each smiling face
 Reflects the joy that beams on it:
 A moment the revels cease; each glass
 Is raised and vics with the lips it nears—
 A sparkling toast from gallant and lass
 To Christmas Eves of the future years.

But see, a queen with a silver staff
 Stills Christmas cheer and marshals all—
 Bids host and guests, with a mocking laugh,
 To follow on through the hollow hall;
 The fairy tread of their slippered feet
 Sounds faint beyond where the embers glow,
 As back they dance to the grave's retreat,
 The Christmas sprites of the Long Ago!

L'ENVOI.

Old manse, how lonely it is tonight!
 How far it seems to tomorrow's dawn!
 The embers die and, from out my sight,
 Fade Christmas revels of Days Long Gone!

An Investment.

I bought some stock upon the mart, no sordid
 money-bearer,
 With coupons on and countersigned and sealed
 with careful heed,
 That I must hold by lock and key and suffer con-
 stant terror
 For fear some person purloins it and leaves me
 poor indeed!
 Ah, no, the stock I bought today was not that kind
 of treasure,
 I have no means by which to get that special
 class of fee,
 Nor do I care! My stock is in the Bank of
 Children's Pleasure.
 That always pays the greatest rate of dividends
 to me!

My purchase was a woolly dog, a drum, a cart and
 dolly,
 A Beau Brummell in gaudy vest upon some
 magic strings,
 A manikin in red, and crowned with mistletoe and
 holly,
 A wond'rous book, an expose of fairy queens
 and kings;
 A toy boat with luffing sail for strange, uncharted
 oceans,
 With rudder true and fearless crew and cables
 always taut,
 A prancing horse and building blocks, and hosts
 of childish notions,
 All struck my reckless fancy as investments and
 I bought.

Ah, poor, indeed, is he who gets his chief or only
 pleasure
 From clipping coupons from his bonds that lie
 in musty piles!
So poorly is he recompensed, and, O how small
 the measure
 Of gain he gets when it's compared to child-
 hood's happy smiles!
I pity him! I envy? No, all envy dies aborning—
 All doubt concerning which of us the wisest
 choice has made
Will disappear on Christmas—in the nursery
 Christmas morning—
 Amid the joy of children where my dividends
 are paid!

“John Thompkins’ Fiddlin’.”

JOHN Thompkins take yer fiddle down—
 It’s been so long ago
 I seed y’ wrassle her aroun’
 An’ heerd y’ tromp her bow,
 ’At all the notes y’ conjured then
 Sound further off each day, an’ when
 I ast ye, John, t’ play again,
 Yew understand, I know.

I want t’ hear y’ take an’ play
 Them tunes I understand,
 That “Ryestraw” jig an’ “Trainin’ Day”
 An’ “Far Frum Native Land.”
 An’ that “My Saylor’s On the Sea,”
 An’ “Nellie Gray” an’ “Hummin’ Bee”
 O, them’s the tunes t’ play fer me,
 John Thompkins, try yer hand!

Jes’ tune her up untwell she screams
 Fer them ’at’s livin’, John,
 Then drap her ’twell she chords with dreams
 Fer them we knowed ’at’s gone;
 Jes’ take her down frum off the shelf
 An’ rosum up her bowstring ’twell ’f
 She’s let alone she’ll play herself,
 Jes’ on— an’ on— an’ on—



John Thompkins Fiddlin'

It's long ago I heerd y', John,
There's ages passed since then,
But still yer notes jes' linger on
In Memory, an' when
The bluebirds sing, it seems their vent
Is nuthin' but the notes unspent
Persarved from your ol' insterment—
I wish y'd play again!

Old Ben Tarr's Idee.

THE man who smiles an' sez "Amen"
 When rain's a-fallin', same ez when
 The sun is shinin', seems t' me
 Hez got about th' *right* idee—
 Who's never faultin' Providence
 Fer things it sends. In consequence,
 I reckon he is God's own ch'ice,
 An' fair well on to'rds Paradise.

I b'lieve th' plainest man, whose plumb
 Hangs true along his life at hum—
 Who's square with men in day's affairs
 An' fair with God in evenin' prayers—
 Who sleeps an' leaves his latch unslung
 Fer ennything he's ever done—
 Now such a man, it seems t' me,
 Ain't needin' much filosophy!

I argy he who duz his best
 An' trusts in Him fer all th' rest—
 Who don't doubt Jonah and the whale
 But b'lieves it cuz it's God's own tale—
 Though humble is thet man, and may
 Have failed in every airthly way,
 Yet, peer he is to you an' I,
 An' fit as saints t' up an' die!

A Man.

DON'T tell me that his faith was true,
 Nor that his trust was firm, nor laud
 His virtues, as they seem to you,
 Nor praise his honesty with God.

For praise of these is small indeed;
 The while he lived his earthly span
 He only kept a given creed,
 And God expects as much of man.

But tell me, was it in his heart
 To leave his beaten path, and seek
 Less happy souls and take their part?—
 To give his might to help the weak?

Was he the man who measured life
 In dollars, cents and days and years?
 Or gauged, beyond the sordid strife,
 In joys and sorrows, smiles and tears?

Did he perceive, and love to read,
 The message, sweet, each flower brings?
 And did he pause in life to heed
 And learn to love God's little things?

Was woman's faithful love the best
 Of all his life gave him of good?
 And what found he the tenderest?—
 The soft caress of babyhood?

The while his sands are ebbing low
 And earth and all around grow dim,
 Please tell me, friend, so I may know
 A *man* greets death, and weep for him.

The Martial Band from Big Elm Flat.

WELL, mebbe they don't, jist as yew say,
 Trill their cadenzers 'n whirligigs. They
 Ain't up t' it, mebbe—'tain't zackly their kin',
 'N mebbe yer idee is duffurnt 'n mine;
 Their music sounds sweet t' my tarnal old ears—
 It carries me back'urds fer forty-odd years—
 'N I'll tell y' aforehandt, I'll wallop y' one
 If y' don't stop bedevilin' an' pokin' yer fun
 At the "rooty-toot-toot,"
 'N the "ratty-tat-tat"

Of the marshul band from Big Ellum Flat!

I 'low they ain't straight on the "p" an' the "q"
 'N don't ack as pert as yer city bands do,
 But they got the knack o' playin' t' please
 'N puttin' the limber juice back in yer knees—
 "The Camptown Races" an' "Rye-straw," tew,
 'N all them old ones that ferever is new;
 An' if it ain't music, whatever it be,
 It's tarnation pleasin' t' fellers like me—
 Is that "rooty-toot-toot,"
 'N the "ratty-tat-tat"

Of the marshul band from Big Ellum Flat.

Another reason I lean tew 'em for,
 Is 'cause I follered 'em all thru the war—
 An' fit t' their music more'n wunct, I declare—
 They was more of 'em then—hain't all of 'em
 there;
 Most of 'em's gone. Eh? Never mind, son,
 Y' needn t apologize fer pokin' yer fun,
 I knowed y' wudn't if ye'd jist understand
 'N knowed what I knowed 'bout that little
 band—
 With its "rooty-toot-toot,"
 'N its "ratty-tat-tat"—
 The marshul band from Big Ellum Flat.

Ol' Ben Tarr's Filosofy.

BLESSED is thet mortul who
 Has lived his life, an', gittin' thue,
 Kin wander back'urds in his mind
 T' whare a cottage stands, all vined
 With trumpet flowers, red an' white,
 Er mornin' glories after night—
 Blessed is thet man, I say.

Blesseder by far is he,
 Still havin' her, who tenderly
 He's loved an' kep' frum passin' harm,
 Kin take her by the willin' arm
 An' lead her tew them joys again—
 The joys made fer simple men—
 Blesseder by far is he.

But blesseder than all is he,
 Who, closin' of his eyes, can see
 Th' evening sun kiss golden hair
 Of youngsters 'round his cottage thare,
 'N have sum dad-burned little chap
 Cum thru th' years an' whisper: "Pap"—
 Blesseder than all is he!

An Old Man's Deductions.

I dunno, but it seems ter me,
 Things ain't like they uster be—
 Folks wuz diffurnt, too, I 'low,
 Years ago than they be now!

Uster be sum kindness showed—
 Folks y' mebbe never knowed
 Wa'n't s' stuckup-like an' classed—
 Bowed t' ever' soul they passed!

Skies don't shine one haff s' blue
 'Pears-like, as they uster do;
 Each fermilyur field an' nook
 'S changed frum how it uster look.

Gals hain't haff s' shy an' pert 's
 When they wore them flarin' skirts,
 Pantelets an' all the rest—
 Old time gal's what I like best!

Weather's got the same idee—
 Great jemmimy, seems t' me,
 Orgust hain't one haff the git
 Up an' git it *bad* to it!

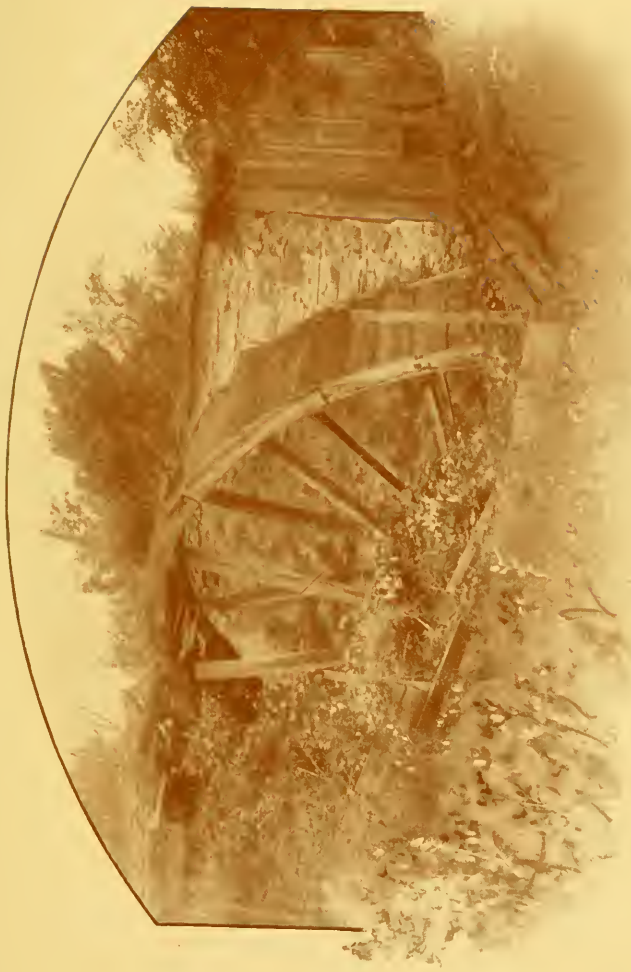
I dunno, but thinkin' 'long,
 Mebbe 'tain't the things that's wrong—
 After all, perhaps it's me
 Changed frum what I uster be!

The Old Home Town.

THE thoughts of home, they seem to bloom
 and grow
 As faithfully as blossoms used to blow
 And drop away, to follow in the fall
 With ripened fruit aplenty and for all;
 So thoughts of home will linger for a bit,
 Then fade, and we are happier for it.

* * * * *

The village street that came a-winding down
 Since stage coach days, whence gypsies came to
 town,
 The fright and fear of children there at play—
 They stopped to “feed” then on its creaking way.
 Their caravan went, its white tops showing still
 For miles away, beyond the tow’ring hill
 That rose abrupt, obscuring from our eyes
 The world beyond and all its glad surprise.
 The “Old Main Road” ’twas called and, wending
 down,
 Audaciously, it cleft the little town
 To two quaint streets where village merchants
 thrived,
 And where—it seemed—the care free people hived
 On summer days or cheated summer showers,
 And whiled away, and talked, the blessed hours.
 A tinshop here, and there, with cheery ring,
 The blacksmith toiled and did his part to sing
 The day away; and stealing o’er the hill,
 O’er clover bloom and fields, the ancient mill
 Sent out its song, a crooning soft and low—
 It sang at work and let the village know;



* * *
*The ancient mill
Sent out its song, a crooning soft and low,*

And yet 'twas still—the sounds of toil were few—
 Familiar sounds that all the village knew!
 'Round open doors were grouped the patriarchs,
 The older men—the group that ever marks
 The village life—and talked of other years
 When war was rife and all was woe and tears;
 And oftentimes their fancies, turned to mirth,
 Some new device, some new-found trick gave birth—
 By subtle twist their crooked canes made fast
 'Round sunburned legs of freckled boys who passed!
 The freckled boys who found the path unseen
 That led away, through pasture and ravine,
 To Scouller's Mill where youngsters got their dole
 Of boyhood fun beside the swimming hole.

* * * * *

And this was home, where evening stars looked
 down

Their kindest and blessed the Old Home Town—
 The place of dream that we remember yet
 And cherish still and never can forget!

Friends.

WHEN Fortune smiled
 And days were bright, it seemed
 I had more worthy friends than I had dreamed,
 Who clustered 'round, felicitating me,
 Whose joy at my good fortune seemed to be
 Without an end.

When Fortune frowned!
 I know what you would say:
 "They shunned you then and let you go your
 way."
 Not so! Not one of them but heard my call
 Of dire distress, and came, for after all
 A friend's a friend!

To a Boy.

COME, a little freckled kid,
 Let us go together
 Swingin' down a lane again,
 Smilin' as the weather.

Let us go beyond the wood,
 Where there's nun t' bother—
 Whilse we smoke some mullin-leaf,
 Keep an eye on father!

Take me to yer swimmin' hole—
 Lemme have my "ruthers"—
 Don't fergit t' dry our hair—
 Mothers will be mothers!

Take me home again at night,
 When the cricket 's crickin'—
 Lemme go today with you,
 An' I'll take the lickin'!

Going to Town With Pa.

I TELL you what I liked to do
 When I was 'bout as big as you,
 Was go t' town with pa!
 They ain't been nuthin' 'fore or sence,
 Of nigh one half the consequence,
 Nor half s' full of pure joy
 As when my mother'd holler: "Boy,
 It's brekfus time, nigh five o'clock—
 'F y'll hurry up an' feed the stock
 Y' kin go t' town with pa."

Beyond the ridge the white road bent—
The furthest then I'd ever went!
 An' then went leadin' down
 Past Jackson's Crick an' Possum Gap,
 Through woods so dark I hung t' pap,
 An' ever' step showed more an' more
 The world I'd never knowed before;
 Past fields o' wavin' wheat an' flax
 An' then across the railroad tracks,
 An' then—t' Burgettstown!

Ah, Burgettstown! Me-trop-o-les
 Of all my youthful dreams, I gess,
 Nun half so great cud be!
 The biggest millwheel ever wrought
 Was turned to grind the grist we brought!
 The biggest things the world aroun'
 I saw right thare in Burgettstown—
 No buildin's half so big an' tall!
 It seemed that there was nuthin' small—
 Exceptin' pa an' me!



" Beyond the ridge the white road bent,"

The sun'd be edgin' to'rds the West
When pa'd allow: "Well, bub, you best,
Climb up here with yer pa,"
An' out from 'neath the seat 'ud cum
The snack that pa had brought from hum—
Sum hard-biled eggs an' ginger snaps
Was allus fa-vor-ites o' pap's—
An' I'd eat, too, till I cudn't see,
An' be plum glad, as glad cud be,
T' git back hum t' ma!

Two Songs.

A singer touched a lofty note—
An eerie something far from me—
That seemed through broadest space to float
And echo back from land and sea;
It was so rich and full and clear,
It pleased my heart and made me cheer.

Then through the years another rang—
A song borne up on mem'ry's wings,
A lullaby my mother sang
Of cradle time and homely things;
It roused the memories that sleep
And touched my heart and made me weep!

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